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Imam
Hussein

and
The Day of
Ashura

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IMAM HUSSEIN AND
THE DAY OF ASHURA'

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**IMAM HUSSEIN AND THE DAY
OF ASHURA'**



CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Hussein: the Revolutionary	10
Scenes from the Struggle	16
Hussein's Devotion	23
The Role of Hussein	25
The Uprising: Why?	33
In Madinah	46
Farewell to the Apostle of Allah	51
In the Inviolable Sanctuary	58
Vanguard and Leadership	66
Despair	72
To Karbala	82
The Promised Land	94
The Last Night	99
The Everlasting Battle	104
Hussein's Star Sets	112
Martyrs' Deaths	114
The Captives Return	119
Impact of the Uprising on the Muslim Ummah	125
Footnotes	129



INTRODUCTION

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

"And think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead, they are alive, (and) by their Lord well provided".

Holy Qur'an (3:169)

The person of Hussein bin Ali (a.s.)^{*} is a symbol, a school and a distinctly unique, political and religious revolutionary movement in the history of Islam. His was a tremendous undertaking which still reverberates throughout the Muslim nation. He has been a propelling force and a seminal element in events throughout Islamic history, particularly in the sphere of jihad (the holy struggle in the way of Allah). Hussein's example has remained vividly alive for generations and centuries. His uprising, movement and ideals still have a deep impact on the conscience and awareness of the ummah.

A host of political, social and religious factors made Imam Hussein(a.s.) rise to challenge Yazid bin Mu'awiyah. A key factor was the violation of the principles upon which Islamic rule is based. The main principles Imam Hussein(a.s.) desired to keep alive were:

^{*} (a.s.) stands for: [aleihi/ aleiha/ alehim/ as-salam] which means 'Peace be upon him/ her/ them'.

1. Paying due attention to the public opinion of the ummah, and regularly consulting it in the conduct of affairs:

(١٥٩:٣)

﴿...وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ...﴾

"...and consult them in the matter..."

Holy Qur'an (3:159)

2. Law and principles stand above everyone. They are the standard according to which the ruler is evaluated. The legality of his position, and his right to the exercise of power is similarly estimated:

(٢٦:٢٨)

﴿فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى...﴾

"...so judge between people with justice and do not follow desire..."

Holy Qur'an (38:26)

(1٨:٥)

﴿...فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ...﴾

"...therefore judge between them according to what Allah has sent down..."

Holy Qur'an (5:48)

3. Establishment of justice and equity between all the people, regardless of social status in the sphere of rights and obligations.

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا

بِالْعَدْلِ...﴾

(٥٨:١)

"Surely Allah commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners and when you judge between people you that you judge with jus-

4. Assuring the leader be both efficient and righteous so that he can discharge his responsibilities:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)^{*} is reported to have said:

"We are commanded to place people in their right positions".

5. Equity in economic distribution ought to be firmly instituted:

﴿مِمَّا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَمَنْ لَا يَكُونُ دَوْلَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾
(Y:64)

"Whatever Allah has restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back and be careful of (you duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil)."

Holy Qur'an (59:7)

Imam Ali (a.s.) is reported to have said:

"Even if all of it was my personal property I would have distributed it equally amongst the needy and poor. Then what is the situation when the property belongs to Allah?"

6. The right of criticizing, advising, guiding and discussing the policies of the leader should be respected and

^{*} (s.a.w.) stands for: (sal-lallahu aleihi wa'alihi wasalam) which means 'May Allah shower His blessings upon him and his holy progeny'.

institutionalized.

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

(١٠:١٢٣)

"And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful".

Holy Qur'an (3:104)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) is reported to have said:

"The best of jihad is that of a word of right spoken to an unjust ruler"

Hussein (a.s.) witnessed the deteriorating political and social situation and clearly recognized that the general policy of the authorities did not jibe with Islamic principles. He was aware of the ummah's numerous and painful afflictions, and was determined to exercise his religious duty, being the duly sanctioned leader and central figure capable of restoring Islamic values.

Thus he rose. His revolt is rich in lessons and divinely inspired attitudes. Hussein embodied the sacrifice of self, money, family, social status and the challenge to terror and cruelty. He patiently traversed hundreds of miles, moving both night and day. The epic protest he engendered came at the most critical political juncture. In fact, the Prophet's grandson had vowed to sacrifice himself.

Eventually he was killed along with his sons, most of his household and all of his companions. The bodies were mutilated and their heads were carried from Karbala, to Kufa and finally Damascus. His womenfolk were taken prisoners and marched across the desert. He himself was expecting all that, but did not budge an inch.

An uprising led by the noblest and best aspected person-

and in the entire ummah is certainly one which is uniquely distinguished as a movement abounding with spiritual, moral and religious ideas. Due to the importance of this personality we are honoured to present this concise, well-documented book to our readers. Hereunder are related the most outstanding incidents of the dynamic Hussein movement, which stands unequalled in its greatness and fills pages upon pages of history.

Such a sublime revolution has to be studied, dissected and fully understood. Lessons should be drawn from it. Here we note that the backward and downtrodden nations must one day follow in the footsteps of Imam Hussein if they are to challenge the despots.

We beseech the Most High and Almighty to make his volume of enduring benefit to our esteemed readers and to be pious in disseminating benevolence and guidance.

He is the Hearing and Answering.

HUSSEIN: THE REVOLUTIONARY

Karbala – Karbala – the garden of swords, blood and inspiration for innumerable pens

Karbala is the word of right, the hymn on the lips of time

Karbala is a poem, a rhyme of anguish and pain

Karbala never passes away. It can never set in the horizon of history. Its anguish can never be effaced from the conscience of free men by the collective conspiracy of tyrants.

At Karbala, clouds of blood rained and generations of martyrs and revolutionaries took root and sprouted. The sound of the fearless voice of Imam Hussein stretches in the valleys of Iraq, ringing in the ears of time. It is a hurricane that shakes and shakes the tyrants. It is a voice of blood violently jolting despotic thrones. It awakens free consciences and stirs within man the spirit of revolution and peace. His voice is still echoing in the ears of mankind.

By Allah, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated nor will I flee like a slave"

Who actually is Hussein? What is the background of this exceptional, unique and great personality? This prominent man of history, the legend of epics, the word of pride and honour was no less the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.w.a.), the son-in-law of his daughter Fatimah al-Zahra and her cousin and husband the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin

Abu Talib bin Abdul Mattalib bin Hashim

The martyr Hussein was born in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah on the fifth of Sha'ban 4 A.H., or according to other sources, on the third of Sha'ban 4 A.H. His birth was applauded by the prophetic family. The Prophet (s.a.w.) himself named him Hussein.⁽²⁾

He was raised under the care of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), his daughter Fatimah (a.s.) and the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (a.s.). Hussein imbibed prophetic morals and drank deeply of the Islamic principles of justice and righteousness. He was dearly loved by the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) who used to carry him and his elder brother Imam Hassan (a.s.) in his arms and declare expansively in front of his companions,

"O Allah, I love them and love those who love them"⁽³⁾

He expressed his deeply felt love for Hassan and Hussein (a.s.) in these words:

"These two sons of mine are my two plants of sweet basil in this world".⁽⁴⁾

"Whoever loves Hassan and Hussein then he loves me and whoever dislikes them then he dislikes me."⁽⁵⁾

The Apostle of Allah would offer his prayers while Hassan and Hussein would take turns in straddling his back. Some of the companions of the Apostle of Allah would try to remove them therefrom but he would respond

"Leave them, may my father and mother be their ransom, whoever loves me, he should love them" (This account is reported by Abu Hatam).⁽⁶⁾

"Whoever is pleased to look at a man from the people of paradise, then let him look at Hussein"⁽⁷⁾.

Thus Imam Hussein was introduced to the Ummah while

seen in the bloom of his childhood as a martyr. His status was confirmed by the Apostle of Allah lest the ummah do him harm.

Decades passed by. The disobedient forgot the words of the Apostle of Allah regarding the high rank of Hussein. They caused grief to the Apostle of Allah by brutally killing his grandson.

One day reminded Muslims of this as it was reported that Umar bin al-Khattab was asked about the haram (pilgrim) and whether it was permissible to kill flies. He retorted: "The people of Iraq ask me about the killing of flies during haram, whereas they had killed the son of the daughter of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). The Apostle of Allah returned to them saying: 'My two plants of sweet basil in this world.'"

History provides another insight taken from Anas bin Malik on which he compared two scenes: the first of which was that of the Apostle of Allah kissing Hussein on his mouth and hugging him. The second one showed Ibn Ziyad the Umayyad governor of Kufa following the martyrdom of Hussein, poking the head of Hussein which had been placed in a basin. He reported,

After the martyr of Hussein bin Ali (a.s.), his head was carried to Ibn Ziyad who started to poke at the teeth with his cane and said: "He was good looking. Let me disturb you. I said: 'I saw the Apostle of Allah kiss the place you poke at on his mouth.' This account was reported by al-Dhahabi.

Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq said:

"I heard the Apostle of Allah saying: 'Hussein and Hussein are the two lords of the youth of paradise'."

This was Hussein in the heart of the Apostle of Allah and described in his living message. He was brought up in the noblest and most dignified house in Islam. Namely the house of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). Hussein partook of his virtues and principles, hence he was the symbol of piety and

hold of the Prophet, with that, even he exploded like
a bomb – in a sense – this is how the values of
the revolt. This is how he exploded and the sentiments rose
up in arms. The blood of Hussein was the catalyst that shook
the Ummayyad from its perch and down.

Feelings of grief and the complex of having failed the
household of the Prophet is now cemented in the Muslims
conscience in the wake of Hussein's martyrdom. As a result
men's long sentences rose up and movements dedicated to
pushing the crimes were formed. This was characterised
by the armed protest of the *Talawa* between opponents and al-
Mukhtar who have seen the murder of Hussein. There was a
series of revocations and their repercussions have yet to die
down.

Muslims have continuously sat in sessions for remembering
Hussein. They relived the massacre of al-Fal from the
very day of Hussein's martyrdom to the present. The war
did not cease and the tears did not vanish. The calamity
which still vivid grows and interacts with the human consci-
ence affects the individual's awareness and intensifies feel-
ings of grief. A literary school took shape and a Hussein
tradition evolved which nurtures the tragedy and revives it
and creates perpetually successive generations.

Thus was Karbala – a brilliant torch for revolt against
tyranny – a symbol for revolutionaries – a cause for grief and
warning. Hussein is a torch that never goes out and is created in
the hearts of every noble and free man.

He is the example for the self-conscious, uncompromis-
ing revolutionary – the one who advocated the rights of the
oppressed. He is one of the near relatives of the Prophet
whom Allah orders us to love.

﴿ قُلْ لَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ جَرْ وَلَا أَمْرُهُ فِي الْعَرَبِ وَمَنْ يَعْرِفْ حَسْبَهُ رَدُّهُ فِيهِ ﴾

﴿ ١٢١٧ ﴾

﴿ ١٢١٧ ﴾

"...I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein."

Holy Quran (42:23)

Hussein was a member of the family of the Prophet (s a w) whom Allah has kept uncleanness away from

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُدْعَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ تَرَجُّسَ آلِ نَبِيِّتٍ وَيُطَهَّرَكُمْ مِنْهَا يَوْمَئِذٍ﴾

٣٢ ٣٣

"Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."

Holy Quran (33:33)

Hussein was one of those identified with the Messenger (s a w) when the contest of prayers with the Christians of Najran was staged

﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّتْ لَيْلَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ آبَاءَكُمْ

وَأَبَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾

٦١ ٦٢

"And whoever disputes with you concerning him (Jesus), after what has come to you of knowledge, then say, (Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us earnestly pray for the curse of Allah on the liars".

Holy Quran (3:61)

SCENES FROM THE STRUGGLE

In the wake of the murder of the third caliph Uthman bin Affan, the Muslims pledged their allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.) and he resumed the administration of state affairs for him. Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan declined to give allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.). He declared himself free of his caliphal authority and subsequently appointed himself caliph of Syria, whose governor he had been under Uthman.

Upon examining the political history of that crucial era of Islamic history, it is clear that Imam Ali (a.s.) was face to face with three political blocs,

1. The Umayyad party led by Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan.
2. The Kharijites who left the army of Imam Ali (a.s.) and disobeyed him.
3. The group of A'ishah, Tahah and al Zubayr bin al Awwam.

After a period characterised by several battles and ceaseless political struggle between Imam Ali (a.s.) and these blocs, Imam Ali (a.s.) crushed the aspirations of A'ishah, Tahah and al Zubayr in the well known Battle of al Jamma (the campaign that took place at Basrah). He also defeated Mu'awiyah at the Battle of Siffin. That episode ended in arbitration which Imam Ali (a.s.) refused to accept when he realized it to be purely political chicanery.

Mu'awiyah won the round of negotiations and the Kharijites left the ranks of Imam Ali's army. Later on, he was to

launched a fierce operation against them at al Mahrawan beat them badly and watered their trees.

In the midst of a chaotic struggle, swords fighting and people struggling, the Kharijites who made up the bulk of the army fought against the Imam of the Muslims, Abu Bakr al-Tamimi, and plans to assassinate Muhammad bin Ahmad and Abu Bakr al-Tamimi. Thus, in the opinion of Abu Bakr al-Tamimi, the ummah was to lose the dearest of its members, the guardian of its principles and the bearer of its standards, the outstanding man of knowledge, and the good deeds.

The post again not history and by many was carried out by Abu Kamil. In May 1968, he entered the Camp of the Holy Land. Abu Kamil was a young man with a passion for the cause. He was at Kula Mawqif, the site of the death of Kamil, in the year 1968. He was a young man and a martyr in the day of the same month.

The Commander of the Far East was the head of state and commander for his province. He had no political life. He was a man of peace and for the time devoted to justice and maintenance of law. A never complete seal of the experience of a ruler in a province. When he was assassinated, a new epoch was ushered in. A new and complicated political picture ensued in which the power equation was altered, transformed and the social equilibrium of society's harmonized evolution and political thought rendered unstable. War came, crept into the rights, guided catastrophe. Man's influence began to expand.

In spite of the fact that the Muslims in Imam Hassan (a.s.) and his unique political and social status to which the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) made mention of, the ummah and despite the wish of his father A'li (a.s.) and the ummah's preference to Hassan as caliph after his father, no winner was Imam A'li (a.s.) martyred then Mu'awiyah declared himself general caliph of the Muslims. He wrote to the Rightly

Guided Caliph Hassan bin Ali Talib(a.s.) demanding his abdication from power while brandishing his sword and threatening to launch a war against him.

History preserved the letter sent to Hassan (a.s.) by Mu'awiyah and Hassan's response. Mu'awiyah wrote to Hassan bin Ali (a.s.) threatening him and demanding his relinquishment of the caliphate. His letter read:

In the Name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful Allah, the Most Exalted, surely deals with His servants the way He wills. There is no repeller of His decree and He is swift to take account. Be cautious lest your death be at the hands of one of the villains from among the people. You should forsake the hope of finding weakness in us. Should you turn away from what you are trying to accomplish and pledge me a allegiance, surely I would fulfill my promises to you and grant you whatever you ask for. Thus, I would be as Ash'ath bin Qays bin Tha'labah described. Should someone trust you with something, then make over the trust to him, so after demise you will be called trustworthy. Do not envy your master when he is opulent. If destitute, then do not turn away from him. You shall be my successor in as much as you are more entitled to the caliphate. Wassalam.

Imam Hassan bin Ali (a.s.) answered him:

"I have received your letter in which you mentioned whatever you wanted to. I have not declined to answer you lest I may do you injustice and I take refuge in Allah from that. Follow right, then you will surely know that I am righteous. The um of what I say, if I lie, is upon me. Wassalam".⁽¹⁾

Imam Hassan could not yield to Mu'awiyah or even consider giving up the caliphate. His position was legal and the people had pledged their allegiance to him as their leader and caliph. He thus prepared himself and mobilized the people and went to war against Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan. The military scales tipped in favour of Mu'awiyah due to the treason of several of Hassan's officers and the letters

Mu'awiyah sent to his prominent supporters, bribing them with the promise of high posts. Imam Hassan had no alternative but to preserve the blood of the Muslims. He ceased hostilities to protect the Islamic entity from outside enemies (i.e. the Romans). He did so temporarily—everything calmed down and conditions would be more to his advantage.

He signed a peace treaty with Mu'awiyah so that the ummah would be guaranteed a stable political atmosphere after the demise of Mu'awiyah. Thus Imam Hassan was forced to give up his right to the caliphate temporarily according to conditions and agreements preserved by history and reported in different formulas and texts.

The agreement was as follows:

1. This is the agreement concluded between Hassan bin Ali bin Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan. According to which Hassan gives up the caliphate in favour of Mu'awiyah on the condition that he should govern the Muslims according to the Book of Allah and the practices of the Apostle of Allah and the rightly-guided caliphs. Mu'awiyah should never appoint anyone other than him as his successor.⁽¹⁴⁾

2. Hassan is the designated caliph after Mu'awiyah. However, should anything happen to Hassan, then Hussein will take over as the head of state.

3. Mu'awiyah should not claim anything against the people of Madinah, Hijaz and Iraq in accordance with their attitudes during the reign of his father, Imam A'raf (a.s.).

4. His governors of the provinces should not curse the Commander of the Faithful from the pulpits, nor mention him with abusive remarks, nor curse him during the qunūt (prayer) of the ritual prayers.⁽¹⁵⁾

5. All people are secure wherever they are.⁽¹⁶⁾

6. Mu'awiyah has no right to manage the bait ul-maa (public treasury) in Kufa. Hassan alone is entitled to manage it.

7. Mu'awiyah should not expose to evil neither Hassan nor his father Husayn nor their followers, supporters or women. He should not confiscate their property.

These terms were written and mutually agreed upon. Harbly was the agreement concluded when Mu'awiyah addressed his partisans.

After that he proposed to give Hassan to give certain things in exchange of his things to him. All of them are now over my hand. After that from now onwards I will not do any thing.

Thus the rightly guided Islamic community ended with the agreement of the conflict by Imam Hassan bin Ali (a.s.). He returned to Madinah after administering the people's affairs, knowing the martyrdom of his father Imam Ali (a.s.) for a period of six months.

Indeed, this was not the end of the whole affair. War and strife were going on in every first day. The conflict in Islam between the companions and the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not cease. Practically, Hassan bin (Hassan and Husayn) set themselves off from the political domain. The companions in the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and their followers was intensified by Mu'awiyah and tensions mounted. It was after the death of Hassan (a.s.) when the people turned to Husayn (a.s.) and decided on giving him their pledge of allegiance and deposing Mu'awiyah.

Mu'awiyah had something else in mind. He determined to appoint his son Yazid to rule the Muslims after him and receive the oath of allegiance on his behalf. That was a blatant violation of the Islamic traditions and rules for appointing the Muslim leader. This decision stirred widespread agitation among the faithful, particularly amongst prominent personalities such as Hassan bin Ali (a.s.), Abdal Rahman bin Abu-Bakr, Abdulah bin al-Zubayr, Abdunah bin Umar and other well-known leading figures.

The historians have clearly conveyed this attitude of

expressing refusal and saying a word of exchange. He was also
some examples.

In the year 5 A.H. Qubayqin was captured by
the Muslims. The Muslims said they would spare it were it
to pledge their allegiance to his son Yazid as his successor.
They did so. It was the first time that a son had suc-
ceeded him and the last ever to do so during his life.

Subsequently he wrote to Mu'awiyah al-Hakim in
Madinah asking him to give him a son of his. His son
Mu'awiyah answered the paper saying: "The Commander of
the Faithful has the view of appointing his son to be suc-
cessor. I am in the view of Abu Bakr." At that point
Abdu-Rahman bin Abu Bakr's son interrupted him
saying: "Is the practice of Khawlan and Umayyad Nubayh
Bakr and others to appoint their sons to succeed them
or anyone of their kinsmen?"

Thereafter, in the year of 5 A.H. Mu'awiyah took the
bay'at from him and selected the army from his sons. Then
he sent for him and said: "O Ibn Umar, You used
to say that you did not pass a night without being under
the command of a prince. I am in you, not to raise dis-
cord or take enmity among the Muslims."

Ibn Umar praised Allah then said: "There had been
a prophet once you who had sons. Your son spent his days
with them. They did not do for their sons what's he did for yours.
But they chose for the Muslims what they viewed as best.
You with me against sowing the seeds of disharmony among
the Muslims. I will never do that. May I am one of the Mus-
lims. When they agree on anything, I will adhere to it. May
Allah have mercy on you." said Mu'awiyah. When Ibn Umar
of Mu'awiyah sent him Abu Bakr who gave the two tes-
timonies. Mu'awiyah then talked: "We wish you would ease
you as regarding my sons." Allah Ibn Abu Bakr inter-
rupted him: "By Allah we will never do that. By Allah you
should turn his father over to the Muslims for consultation."

or we will force you to reconsider the matter. With that he rose to his feet and quickly left. (O Allah, Mu'awiyah asked Allah suffice me against him by whatever you will, and he succeeded. Allah waited a minute.) Don't tell the Syrians anything of this. I fear they might attack you. Wait till the evening when I will tell them you have given us the pledge of allegiance, then you can do whatever you wish. Then he sent for Ibn al-Zubayr and said to him: (O Ibn al-Zubayr, you are nothing but an excuse for going in and out and coming out of another. You have turned these two men into changing their opinions?'

If you are uninterested in the rulership, retorted Ibn al-Zubayr, then give it up. If you bring your son along to pledge him our allegiance, suppose we did so, whom of you should we obey and listen to? It is impossible to pledge our allegiance to both of you. On saying this he left.

Mu'awiyah ascended the pulpit. After praising Allah he said: We have seen that what the people talk about is flawed. Allegedly, they said that Ibn Umar, Ibn Abu Bakr and Ibn al-Zubayr will not give their pledge of allegiance to Yazid. But they have obeyed him, listened to him and pledged their allegiance to him.

By Allah, retorted the Syrians, We will not be pleased until they pledge their allegiance to him publicly, otherwise we will behead them!

Grieve to Allah, he repeated. How the people hasten to expose the Quraysh to evil! I will never hear this from you another time!

Then he got down from the pulpit. The people were gossiping. Ibn Umar, Ibn Abu Bakr and Ibn al-Zubayr have pledged their allegiance, they would assure them. No, by Allah we have not done it, and the people would repeat again. Yes, you did. Then Mu'awiyah set off for Syria.

HUSSEIN'S DEVOTION

Islamic law organizes political behaviour and bases it on perfectly set doctrinal, ethical, and legal principles. It has also imparted a special status to the treaties and agreements. The Almighty says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ . ﴿١٦٥﴾

١٦٥

"O you who believe! Fulfill the contracts ..."

Holy Qur'an (5: 1)

And He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ . إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولَةً . ﴿١٦٦﴾

(١٦٦)

"...and fulfil the promise; surely (every) promise shall be questioned about."

Holy Qur'an (17: 34)

The Imams of the household of the Prophet (s a w) represented the examples and the vanguard in their behaviour and ethical commitment. Their practical political behaviour was a genuine personification of the political jurisprudence in Islam. Never was the "ends justify the means" their policy, when dealing with the masses or with their adversaries and opponents. Islam views politics as being based on ethical and

spiritual grounds. That was why Imam Hussein (a.s.) turned down the demand of the Iraqi masses loyal to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) who bore the brunt of the Umayyad oppression when they turned to him after the martyrdom of Imam Hassan and sent him urgent letters demanding the overthrow of Mu'awiyah and giving the Imam their allegiance. He made it clear to them he would not accept the offer. He chose to abide by the treaty between Hassan(a.s.) and Mu'awiyah and would not break it.

Sheikh al-Mufīd recorded his position as follows:

"This is what was reported by al-Ka'bi, al-Mada'ini and other historians. When al-Hassan(a.s.) died the Shi'ah in Iraq began to make plans. They wrote to Husayn(a.s.), concerning removing Mu'awiyah and giving the pledge of allegiance to him. However, he refused and pointed out that there was an agreement between himself and Mu'awiyah which he could not break until the period of the contract came to an end. However, when Mu'awiyah died, he informed them he would examine the matter" (26).

THE ROLE OF HUSSEIN

Mu'awiyah overcame all obstacles and strengthened his grip on the people supported by money, showiness and terror. He then passed power to his son Yazid. With all this already done, the Umayyad party still felt insecure over the state of affairs. The new ruler could never change the ummah's values and principles for the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had sown the seeds of revolt towards his household, and the Qur'an infused a living cultural spirit and certain political values into its depths. The ummah clearly knew the attributes of the Imam and were ready to recognize him as its leader. It knew its position, duty and readily stated its historical role. It refused despotism and the concept of intransience in politics which was imposed on it.

Twenty years of the Umayyad party's rule and its monopolizing of money, power and all major administrative posts was certainly sufficient to stimulate the ummah to rise and smooth the way for the removal of Yazid bin Mu'awiyah who had been forced to impose upon it. Naturally, when trials intensify and crises follow in rapid succession and the ummah found itself encircled by a wall of terror and political despotism, the ummah looked to the opposition figures, the wise ones and the pivots of the movement that represented the revolutionary spirit. At the time, there was no one qualified to lead the ummah except Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.). He was the lord of the sons of Quraysh, the

grandson of the Apostle of Allah, the son of the Commander of the Faithful and the best of men in knowledge, piety, efficiency and morality. No Muslim could ignore him, or was unacquainted with him. They knew his uncompromising attitude vis-à-vis Mu'awiyah's appointment of his son Yazid as his heir apparent to the caliphate. On the other hand, Mu'awiyah himself feared him, owing to his ability to lead the ummah, stir its inner feelings, and mobilize it to rise up in arms.

Yazid too, knew full well the strong tie connecting the ummah to Hussein. He certainly realized that Hussein was firm, intense, and revolutionary. He was aware of Hussein's refusal of his succession to the caliphate as well. Therefore, his full attention was focused on Hussein, and so were his fears. In the course of the first days of his assuming power, he wrote to al-Walid bin Uthayb bin Abi Sulaym, the governor of Madinah, a letter that read:

Get Hussein, Abdullah bin Umar, and Ibn al-Zubayr to pledge their allegiance, and allow them no delay in doing this.

Al-Walid received the letter and word about Mu'awiyah's death — the announcement of Yazid's succession to the caliphate and his duty of getting the persons mentioned in the letter to give Yazid their oath of fealty. It was a politically burdensome task indeed, and a heavy responsibility. He mentioned nothing about the letter to anyone and pondered for some time. Then he called Marwan to inform him of the situation and consult him on how to carry out Yazid's bidding concerning Hussein, lest the matter get out of hand.

Marwan offered no advice except terror, and tough measures. He counselled al-Walid:

I take the view of calling them now and ordering them to give their pledge of allegiance. If they do so, you should accept that of them and leave them. However, upon denying

that you should behead them before they know of Mu'awiyah's death. Should they know it, then every one of them would leap into a place from which he would oppose the caliph and call the people to follow him. Ibn Umar, however, does not approve of waging war. He would not like to rule over people unless he attains rulership peacefully.

The consultation was over, the line of action was defined and the position was adopted. They hastened to besiege Hussein and take him off guard. That was an adequately appropriate measure — as al-Walid thought — before word of Mu'awiyah's demise spread and before public opinion was stirred and people would turn to Hussein, the grandson of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), and give him their vows of loyalty.

"Al-Walid sent Abdullah bin Umar bin al-Uthman — who was just a child — Hussein and Ibn al-Zubayr to ask them to call on al-Walid. He found both of them seated in the mosque. He met them at a time when al-Walid would not receive people in a general assembly. He said to them: 'Answer the governor's call.' Go away, we will call on him soon," they told him.¹⁷²⁸

It was an unusual situation. This was not lost on Hussein (a.s.) who wondered what the whole matter was about. What was al-Walid up to?

Imam Hussein (a.s.) and Ibn al-Zubayr simultaneously understood the criticality of the situation. They both realized that something new had taken place and an unusual political situation had arisen. Otherwise what was al-Walid's order for? Why did it come at a time when al-Walid would not usually receive people?

"Why do you think he (al-Walid) sent for us for at this time when he does not receive anyone?" Ibn al-Zubayr wondered.

"I think their tyrant (Mu'awiyah) has died. He sent for us to get us to give our pledge of allegiance before the news of Mu'awiyah's

death spreads among the people," Hussein answered him

"I don't think otherwise. Now, what are you going to do?" asked Ibn al-Zubayr

"I will gather my retainers now and go to meet him, I will leave them at the door and go in his presence", Hussein (a.s.) answered

"I fear lest he harms you when you go into (his place)"
Ibn al-Zubayr replied

"I will not meet him unless I am able to prevent him from doing any harm to me"

Thus Hussein prepared himself to meet the Umayyad plot, realizing the need of quick action and knowing the way of dealing with this faction, he said,

"I will not meet him unless I am able to prevent him from doing any harm to me".

These words summed up the decision taken by Imam Hussein (a.s.) firmly and unflinchingly and uncompromisingly challenge the power of Yazid. This was his response to Yazid's usurping power. He knew Yazid well and realized his political, moral and spiritual unworthiness. To divest Yazid, the oppressive usurper of power, of legitimacy, there had to be shed and an uprising. The sword had to be lifted and blood shed.

Hussein (a.s.) the Lord of the Martyrs, sent for his brothers, his kinsmen and entourage. There around him gathered thirty courageous men. He moved to meet al-Walid, accompanied by his bodyguards and aides, ready to fight. He would never yield to Yazid. Not an iota of feebleness was in his style of argument. In him was the heart of Al-Bitr Abi Taub and in his hand was the sword of right. In him was the breath of prophethood, the firmness of Imamah, and the honour of manliness.

Hussein went to the palace of al-Walid. Marwan bin al-Hakam was present there. Hussein placed his men in a spot

from which they could witness what was going on and in case of emergency come to his help. The e they seated them selves so that nothing would escape them. A watchword was agreed upon between Hussein (a s) and his companions beforehand as a precautionary measure.

He had ordered them

"If I call you, or you heard my voice raised then come to my help altogether. Otherwise stay where you are till I return to you."

Hussein (a s) came over to where al Walid was sitting. Greeting the two men, he said. Al Walid told him about the death of Mu'awiyah. Then he asked him to give his pledge of allegiance to Yazid.

"O prince' pledge of allegiance cannot be given secretly. When you call the people tomorrow, call me with them". Hussein (a s) suggested.

Marwan at that point interrupted him. *"O prince don't accept his offer. If he declines to give his pledge of allegiance then cut his head off."*

Upon hearing this Hussein got angry and retorted,

"Woe to you, O son of a foreign woman, will you cut my head off?" By Allah, you have told a lie and shamed your base origin."

Then he turned to al Walid and said to him,

"O prince' We are the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) We surely are the centre of the message, and to our house the angels descend from heaven. By us Allah sent his first Apostle and by us He sent the seal of the Prophets. Yazid, on the other hand, is a corrupt man, who imbibes wine, puts to death the soul which Allah forbids to be destroyed and declares his debauchery in public. A man like me would never give a vow of loyalty to him. But we will see about that in the morning, so will you. We will see and so will you, who is more entitled to the office of caliphate and to receive the pledge of allegiance." With that Hussein (a s) left.

"You disobeyed me" Marwan told al Walid.

"Woe to you. You have chosen for me something which

would have involved the destruction of my own faith and life. By Allah, I would not want all that exists of worldly wealth (as a reward) for killing Hussein. By Allah, surely a man responsible for the blood of Hussein, will weigh little in the scales of Allah, on the Day of Resurrection. Allah will never look at him, nor will He purify him, but a painful punishment is in store for that soul" (31)

The meeting came to an end. Hussein returned home. He was bent on making a war against Yazid. He began to make suitable preparations. Makkah would serve as his base to declare war and be the place where he would mobilize his forces.

The Uprising, Why?

THE UPRISING: WHY?

Hussein (a.s.) made no secret of the true motives behind his leaving Madinah and why he was declaring war against Yazid. He gave unambiguously clear answers to those who wanted to know. He outlined the identity of his movement and the principles according to which he would challenge the new Umayyad regime. All the above points were listed in a letter he sent to his brother Muhammad bin al Hanafiyah.

He underlined further that the deterioration of the political, social and theological situation and his onerous responsibility for reforming the ummah impelled him to move and leave Madinah to lead the opposition against the new Umayyad rule.

His letter read

"I am not taking up arms in order to make merry or be ecstatic over what I possess. I am not making mischief, nor exercising oppression. But I am ready to fight for the sole goal of seeking reform of the ummah of my grandfather the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). I want to enjoin good and forbid evil and guide the affairs of the people as my grandfather and father were doing.." (143).

He thus summed up the cause behind his refusal in giving pledge of allegiance to Yazid.

"Yazid is a corrupt man, who imbibes wine, puts to death the soul which Allah forbids to be harmed and declares his debauchery

in public. A man like me would never give pledge of allegiance to him. 1970

Is'mā' explicitly stipulates that the leader of the ummah must abide by the principles of justice and equity. He should head the laws of shari'ah and the way of the ummah in highest esteem. Sovereignty of the Law is a matter of no compromise on his part. He should refrain from ruling oppressively and misappropriating his post as a way to gain wealth, luxury and monopoly of property and privileges.

As well known by both Hassan (c. 5) and the generality of the ummah, Yazid was obviously unfit to lead. He was a libertine whose key focus was on making mischief. Yazid was totally engrossed in womanizing, drinking wine, playing with monkeys, reciting poetry, horse racing and hunting.

The entire ummah agrees upon the fact that leadership ought not to be granted to anyone who lacks the ability of becoming an exemplary leader in his deeds, morals and understanding the import of the divine laws. He must also be pious and devout. Thus how could Hassan (c. 5), the son of the Caliphate of the Apostle of Allah (c. 1), and the sole leader of the ummah, the centre of the hopes of the people, yield to Yazid?

It was for these reasons that Hassan (c. 5) declined to give military allegiance to Yazid and set his heart on taking up arms against him. He made his case public in his correspondence with his followers in different cities of the Islamic state, making clear why he chose to rise. In the meantime, he exposed some deviations being instituted by the oppressive and deviant regime.

In his letter to the Muslims of Iraq, Hassan (c. 5) pointed out the qualifications of the true Imam, so as to nurture their political awareness and clearly identify the person worthy of being the leader of the ummah:

... for by my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the

Book: one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth and one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah.”

He also wrote to the key leaders of Basrah, who were Malik bin Maslamah al-Bakri, al-Ahnaf bin Qays, al-Muthanna bin al-Ja'afar, Mayad bin Amru, Qays bin al-Harith and Amru bin Ubayd bin Mu'ammir. One of his scribes, Sulayman Abu Razin, delivered the letter to them. It read:

“I call on you to abide by the Book of Allah and the practice of His Apostle (s.a.w.). The Prophet's practice has now been put aside and detourers created. Should you grasp my words and obey me, then, I will most certainly lead you along the path of right conduct. And may Allah bestow peace and mercy on you.”

Husayn (a.s.) viewed questions of state, politics, the ummah, leadership and Imamate from the perspective of Qut'an. As opposed to that, Yazid viewed these questions from his castle of oppression. Leadership, in the eyes of Husayn (a.s.), was a vehicle to place the ummah on the road of guidance and reform, a means to nourish people with living laws and build their characters and (also) to organize them and develop them towards good and perfection.

In his view, the Islamic state had the underpinnings of Islam, according to which it formulates its regulations and its constitutional values. The state organs are assigned the task of protecting the principles and aims of the ummah. These organs are authorized by the ummah to institute rules, uphold justice and provide services. In addition, they are answerable to the ummah and Allah the Almighty.

Reviewing the Imam's letters, arguments, sermons and correspondence, along with the political, economic and social circumstances of the time, we can deduce the following realities:

1. Oppression and monopoly of power on the part of the Umayyads was a fact. A distinct political class had taken shape. A tribal-based party came into being which was the

Unmanned group. It monopolized power, wealth and education, whereas the majority of the people were deprived these instruments so much so that the state became the private property of the Unmanneds.

⁵ Milder, 1987, 1988, and Shick, 1989, 1991 were preserved.

4. The country was financially spent. A capital of \$500,000 was left to fight beside poverty and pestilence. The majority of the government officials were lacking in the qualifications to discharge their duties.

4. It is assumed that for becoming social the children (or adolescents) have to put into public the individual symptoms (sexual, emotional, and group behavior).

...the whims and private interests of the ruling governments was substituted for the shared spiritual goals of the life of the ummah.

the Avars, the latter associated with distorting the traditions of the Avars of Asia, has a new and forging new sense. It was accepted. Dialectic groups such as the Latins were raised to new status, pretexts for the devious political behaviour of the rulers.

He then analysed the figures and accounts reflecting the
 the social trends and the gap that existed between
 the industrial revolution. An in-depth study of that epoch
 was concentrated in the uprising of Hussentals was in his
 necessity. The deteriorating situation generated the
 subject of the book, the revolt. Hussentals was all no
 choice, a uprising against oppression.

...the...degraded...of the degeneration of
social security and peace

﴿فَتَقَبَّلْهُ رَبُّهُ عَبْدُ الْبَيْتِ﴾ * ثَلَاثِي أَطْعَمَهُ مِنْ جَوْعٍ وَشَبَّهَ مِنْ حَرِّهِ ۝

"So let them worship the Lord of this House who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear".

Holy Qur'an (108:3-4).

مَنْ قَتَلَ عَدُوًّا مِمَّنْ وَفَدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَقَدْ قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ رَسُولًا مُبِينًا فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ كَذَّبُوهُ فَسَبَّوهُ فَكَبَرُوا عَنْهُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ بَاطِنَةً إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ يُسْرِفُونَ

۲۲۰

"... whoever slays a soul any one for other than manslaughter or (far) corruption in the land: it is as though he had slain all mankind and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all mankind and certainly this Messenger came to them with clear signs, then surely many of them thereafter commit excesses in the land
 Holy Qur'an (5: 32)

The ruling party hung its sword and whip on the necks of the people. It opened wide its prisons for them and was engrossed in a vicious campaign against the enemies, particularly the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the prominent & active supporters of Imam Ali (a.s.), Hassan and Hussain (a.s.)

One of the enemies of the regime described the prevailing atmosphere, recalling those conditions for his companions in these words:

"You would be put to the sword. Your arms and legs would be cut off. Your eyes would be burnt with heated pebbles. You would be crucified on date palm tree trunks owing to your love for the household of your Prophet. You would remain in your houses, challenging your enemies."

Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan decided to annihilate the opposition leaders of the followers and supporters of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). He put to the sword such a large number of them that history cannot state exactly their number.

It is here deemed necessary to list a few of them.

One was Hijr bin Uday, who was a revered companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Whom al-Hakim in his book *al-Mustadrak* described as the monk of the companions of Muhammad.

mad (s a w)”¹³⁷

Imam Hussain (a s) protested the slaying of this deeply respected friend of the Prophet (s a w) along with his companions. The protest was recorded in a letter he sent to Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan. Hussain praised therein this righteous political personage in these words:

“Aren't you the murderer of Hujr from the tribe of Kinda, along with his fellow worshippers, who were condemning injustice, those who deemed the present heterodoxies a transgression of the faith and who would not fear the retribution of anyone? You have aggressively and unjustly slain them after giving them strongly sworn oaths and testaments”, referring to the fifth item of the peace treaty *“that you would never punish them for something that transpired between you and them, nor because of a grudge you held for them”*.¹³⁸

Owing to their firm opposition to Mu'awiyah and the announcement of their loyalty to Imam Ali (a s) and his offspring, a number of Hujr's companions were also slain. They were:

1. Sharik bin Shaddah al-Hadhrami
2. Sayfi bin Shaddad al-Shaybani
3. Abdur-Rahman bin Hassan al-Inzi,
4. Qabisah bin Rabi'ah al-Ibsi,
5. Kidam bin Hayyan al-Inzi,
6. Mihriz bin Shihab bin Bujayr bin Sufyan bin Khalid bin Munqir al-Tamimi.

Besides that Mu'awiyah also killed political figures and leading opposition pioneers who gave their support to Imam Ali (a s) and his offspring. These men included:

1. Amru bin al-Humq al-Khuz'i;

He was a venerated companion of the Prophet (s a w) and an honourable migrant who enjoyed special status before the Prophet (s a w). He was beheaded in Mosul. His head was transferred to Damascus. His was the first head in the history of Islam to be taken from one place to another.

Eventually, the head was handed over to his wife in Mu'awiyah's prison. When the slaves of Mu'awiyah threw the head in her lap for the purpose of further terrorizing her, she placed her hand on his forehead and wanted a kiss on his mouth. Then she addressed them in these words:

"You have hidden it from me for a long time, then you sent it after his being killed as a gift. It is a welcomed gift never to be abhorred." (39)

2. Abdullah bin Yahya al-Hadhrami and his companions

3. Rashid al-Hujari, whose legs and arms were cut off before he was killed

4. Juwariyah bin Musahhir al-Ahdi

5. Awfar bin Hossyn. He was the first to be killed at Kufa by Ziyad following an argument between them. Ziyad had asked him about al-Harith (the third caliph) and his answers were satisfactory for Ziyad. Then Ziyad asked him about himself (Ziyad). Awfar's answer apparently infuriated Ziyad,

"I have heard that you said in Basrah: By Allah I punish the innocent instead of the sick and the one coming instead of the one leaving," inquired Awfar.

"Indeed I had said that", replied Ziyad.

"Then you have done a mess of a thing," retorted Awfar.

"The proud arrogant one is not the worst" of the group said Ziyad indignantly and he killed him. (40)

Ibn al-Atheer recorded the bloody account of events that took place in the city of Basrah the wake of the peace treaty between Harsanta's and Mu'awiyah. He said:

"After Ziyad appointed Sumrah temporarily as a governor of Basrah, the latter killed great numbers of people. Ibn Sirin said: During the absence of Ziyad, Sumrah put to the sword eight thousand men. Don't you fear you have killed an innocent person?" Ziyad asked Sumrah. "Had I killed a double number I would never have feared," replied Sumrah. Abu al-Sawari al-Adawi said: Sumrah had killed, during a

single day forty seven of my companions. All of them had memorized the Qur'an"⁴⁰.

These are a few of the sanguineous pictures extracted from that period. They manifest the savage nature of the regime and its maltreatment of the community, particularly the opposition forces, those who staunchly adhered to the household of the Prophet (saw) and those that were independent.

I speak of the antagonistic propaganda against the household of the Prophet (saw) if it suffices to say that the regime did not let a chance slip by without unleashing a vile, delamatory campaign against the pretensions of the Prophet (saw), Hassan and Hussain (sa). As for Imam Ali (sa), the authorities devoted a lot of massive slanderous propaganda that aimed at expressing the detestation and scorn from the pulpits in which Imam Ali (sa) was vilified and his immaculate image distorted. This regime inspired conspiracy to hatred the ummah in the whole and Hassan and Hussain, their supporters and followers in particular. These elements were acquainted with Imam Ali (sa) and knew how grand a Muslim he was, so it was thus difficult for them to keep silent.

Al Mas'oodi (the prominent historian) cites an anecdote that transpired between Mu'awiyah and Sa'd that underlines the fact that Mu'awiyah himself was behind the propaganda campaign.

Al Mas'oodi narrated:

Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Jarra' al-Tabar reported on the authority of Muhammad bin Hanzal al-Razi on the authority of Ali Mufahid on the authority of Muhammad bin Ishiq on the authority of Ibn Abi Naji who said: Mu'awiyah went to perform hajj (pilgrimage). He made the lawt (circumambulation) accompanied by Sa'd. Upon finishing his lawt, Mu'awiyah went to the hall where he would receive people. He asked Sa'd the secretary as he

Mu'awiyah then began to talk about Ali abusively. Sa'd moved a little and said indignantly: "You hit me on your head then began to revile Ali as well." By Allah had I had more merits than were Ali's it would have been more valuable to me than if I had been given the whole of worldly wealth. By Allah if I were the son-in-law of the Apostle of Allah (saw) and had no spouse like that of Ali it would have been more valuable to me than if I had been given the world's wealth. By Allah had the Apostle of Allah said to me on the day before the Battle of Khaybar: "Tomorrow I will give the standard to one whom Allah and His Apostle love and he loves Allah and His Apostle. He never loses the battlefield and Allah will bring victory at his hands," it would have been more valuable for me than if I had been given the entirety of worldly wealth. By Allah had the Apostle of Allah (saw) said to me on the day of the Battle of Uhud: "Are not you pleased that you are in the same position with respect to me as Harun was to Musa except that there is no prophet after me," it would have been more valuable to me than if I had been given the whole of worldly wealth. By Allah I will never enter your house as long as I am alive. Then he left him.¹⁷⁴²

Ibn al-Atheer reported:

But bin Arttaah was at the home of Mu'awiyah. He reviled Ali Zayd ibn Umar bin al-Khattab whose mother was aumm Kuthum the daughter of Ali who was present there hit him with a stick on the head and cut him.

He, also, reported:

When al-Maghira was appointed as a governor of Kufa he sent Kuthayr bin Shibab to al-Ras as its governor. It was only when Ziyad substituted al-Maghira as the new governor of Kufa that Kuthayr's habit of reviling Ali was approved of.¹⁷⁴³

Al-Mas'oodi further reported:

"Ziyad gathered the people at the door of his palace in

Kufa, urging them to curse Ali. Whoever declined, was put to the sword¹⁴⁵.

This vicious campaign against Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) lasted till Umar bin Abdul Aziz assumed power. He put an end to it and purged the governmental system.

Umar was deeply ascetic and unassuming. He dismissed the officials employed by the previous Umayyad ruler and employed the best of men, who adopted his method in dealing with affairs. He put an end to the reciting of Ali (a.s.) on the pulpits and replaced it by the noble verse: *'Our Lord! forgive us and those of our brethren who had preceded us in faith, and do not allow any spite to remain in our hearts towards those who believe. Our Lord! surely You are Kind, Merciful.'* It was said the previous verse was: *'Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion...'*¹⁴⁶

Still others said that both of these verses were ordered by Umar to replace the reciting of Ali (a.s.). The ulama (the pious scholars) began to use them in the Friday sermon.

If we leave apart these impulses and motivations that encouraged the uprising on the part of the opposition, which in turn was aimed at the putting into effect of the principles of justice and equity set forth by Islam, abiding strictly by these principles, aside from them, we will find in the economic domain other reasons for the uprising.

The ruling regime was intentionally ignoring the orders for economic distribution set forth by Islam. These laws emphasize equality in distributing wealth, ban monopolizing and maintain the necessity of securing welfare for the poor.

The violation of these laws resulted in the emerging of motivational stimuli towards uprising. The ummah turned to Imam Hussein to lead the movement. There were then many factors behind the revolt: economic, political and security reasons, among others.

The weaker classes felt the loss of their rights and the appallingly widespread poverty among their ranks. Whereas wealth was amassed in the hands of a certain stratum, while Qur'an warns

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ آلَافَ وَالْعَصَدَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ

أليم﴾

٣٤٩

"and (as for) those who hoards gold and silver and spend them not in the way of Allah, give them the tidings of a painful punishment"

Holy Qur'an (9:34)

﴿مَا هِيَ لَكُمْ عَنْ رَسُولِهِ مِنْ هَلْ أَفْرَىٰ هُنَّ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَدِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَسْمَىٰ
وَأَمَّا كَيْفَ فِي السَّيْلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُونَ بَيْنِ الْأَعْيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا أَتَاكُمْ الرِّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ
وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْهَوْا وَأَتَوْا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾

١٧٥٩

"Whatever Allah has restored to his Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it and from whatever he forbids you, keep back and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil)."

Holy Qur'an (59:7)

The economic structure during that period was thoroughly recorded by the historians. They wrote about the disturbed scales of economic distribution. Individuals were the possessors of great wealth. Certain ones took advantage of the Umayyad influence from the outset, during the latter years of the rightly-guided caliphs, at which time they ter ally piled up money.

"The historians, as an example mentioned that Amru

Yusuf al-Azī was the governor of Egypt under Ma'wiyah. His wealth amounted to 500,000 ¹dirhams, 1,000 ²dirhams crops worth 200,000 ³dirhams in Egypt and the well known estate of al-Whab in Egypt which was worth 10,000 ⁴dirhams. Another one, 'Abdul Kadirman in Asf, divided his estate twice into 50 shares, every share which was to be given to one of his women was worth 80,000 ⁵dirhams.⁶

Ma'wiyah gave Hukaym 200,000 ⁷dirhams from the revenues of Asf. 'Ibn 'Aas received a gift worth 100,000 ⁸dirhams. 'Atallah bin Kharabāh Usayb received a gift worth 400,000 ⁹dirhams.¹⁰ The wealth of Yazid bin Unayb was estimated at 500,000 ¹¹dirhams, in addition to debts his people owed him and estates in five different instruments of inheritance valued at 800,000 ¹²dirhams.¹³

Said bin 'Amr Waqqas after his death left 250,000 ¹⁴dirhams.¹⁵ Said bin 'U Mas'ud reported that Yazid bin Thabit left after his death quantities of gold and silver that might be broken by axes and money and estates worth 100,000 ¹⁶dirhams as well.¹⁷

These figures conveyed by the historians outline an exceptionally distinguished aristocratic class. It goes without saying that the afore-mentioned figures are merely samples. As a result, two social classes took shape: a wretchedly deprived and poverty-stricken class on the one hand and an excessively wealthy class that possessed money, property, estates and so on, on the other hand. The Muslims who witnessed nothing as worse as that before, began to move to rectify these wrong practices.

Husayn bin 'U was the only choice for the people to turn to. He was known to be the ruler who compensated his people. Isma'el bin 'U As for Yazid he could not play this role, he was, as described by the historians.

The owner of beasts of prey, tigers, monkeys, panthers and he used to throw singing parties and drink wine with his companions. One day after the murder of Husayn he said:

drink, with Ibn Zayd on his right hand. He addressed the cup-bearer saying:

Had not a cup fallen with a salutation, my slaves, I would have given a simar to one of Ibn Zayd. He is my slave, and the one who fulfils my desires and secures my status. Then he addressed the singers, singing those exact words.

Yazid's pleasures and activities were influenced by his corruption. During his rule, vice spread throughout Makka and Medina. Muslim instruments were used. People began to drink wine in public. He had a monkey named Abu Qays, which he would bring along with him, where he and his associates would drink wine. He would place a pillow for his monkey which was very fine. He would carry it on a wild steed, which had been tamed, with a saddle and reign. Abu Qays would take part in competitions against horses on a fixed day. One day it won the race. As soon as the stick that was put at the end where the room entered at the track and came into the room at the head of the horses, the monkey wore a finer garment of red and yellow silk and a cap on its head made of green silk with intricate rose patterns. On the horse was a saddle of red silk with different coloured spots.

All these factors converged to produce a great motivating force for al-Harithi. There was no alternative and this was to assume that sublime attitudes which marked his name in history.

IN MADINAH

Early on Hussein fully realized the vicious plan of the Umayyad faction. He was quite sure that a painfully terrible affliction would befall the ummah. His regal responsibility called on him to rise as the sole leader, particularly when the ummah had nobody except him to save it. His staying at Madinah was of no avail. Politically tension mounted while public opinion was in disarray. Furthermore, the treaty between Mu'awiyah and Hassan (a.s.) was broken. Mu'awiyah in no way abided by it. Al-Walid and Marwan were pressing him to give his pledge of allegiance to Yazid. Once again they sent for him. His response was,

"Tomorrow, both of us will see what we can do",⁵⁴

Hussein settled for a swift initiative to find a solution to the dangerously critical circumstances as a result of Yazid's accession to the office of caliphate, which was in open violation of the treaty between Imam Hassan (a.s.) and Mu'awiyah. Secondly, it ran counter to what the Muslims were accustomed to. Thirdly, Yazid was unfit for the leadership of the ummah. Fourthly, the Umayyad family had usurped the caliphate. Fifthly, the ruling family deviated from Islam and its laws. For all these reasons Hussein (a.s.) decided to set off for Makkah to put everything in order, preparing to begin his challenge to the regime.

Following the night of his meeting with al-Walid, the gov-

came of Makhadh and Mewan bin al-Hakam who was one of the prominent Umayyad poets. Makhadh and Mewan the Umayyad poets makers of the Umayyad gathered his family encourage and companions and set off for Makhadh. Although the uprising began to be suppressed by its enemies in his city and was destined to fail perpetually, Hussein embarked on his journey, insisting that the Ummah had entered a path towards a future where there were no longer six stages. Given the fact that the Umayyad faction was in a position of power, here was the urgent need to shake the conscience of the ummah and shake it politically.

Great deeds may require achievements and effective social changes can only be brought into being by activists that are righteous men and highly principled leaders who are seen in the conscience of the ummah and influence its awareness and guide the course of their communities.

Only Hussein was qualified to instigate the Umayyad through a mixture of a sincere and a sincere under Yazid. No matter what would be the ultimate result of the uprising, he was able to leave his stamp on the Ummah and pave the way for shahada to the unjust ruler. Either he could not destroy the regime or his victims were the only alternatives. If victorious, he would bring Islam to life through putting it into practice. In case he attained martyrdom, then the holy cascade of blood would flow through the valleys fertilizing other valleys and irrigating the parched lands of martyrdom.

The holy caravan that set out on its journey to Makhadh is essentially a permanent document of the Islamic message. Hussein emphasized the divine base and the egalitarian principle of Islam. This was the method with which to deal with the oppressive ruler. He for the first time in the history of Islam imparted egalitarian revolutionary movements against oppressive rulers.

Men gathered around Hussein and began the long path of struggle. Hussein took with him his brothers, sons,

his brother's sons and the majority of his family with the exception of his nephew, Muhammad bin al-Harith, a slave in the depths of his soul. Husayn could not suffice and had to advise his brother:

"Avoid giving your people of allegiance to Yazid and avoid the towns where you are. Then send your messengers to the people and summon them to follow you. If the people prefer a regency to you, then praise Allah for that and if they agree upon someone other than you, Allah will not make your reckoning nor your reason deficient on that account nor will He remove your manliness and outstanding merit because of it. I am afraid that you will encounter one of these towns and the people will differ with each other; a group will be for you and in other against you. They will fight and you will be a target for the first of their spears. Then the rest of all this ummah, in person, in father and in mother will be the one whose blood was most terribly exposed and whose family most humiliated."

"Where should I go, brother?", asked Husayn.

"Go and stay in Makkah," he answered. "If the base is secure for you, it will be a means for gaining power. However, if it becomes dangerous for you, then you can take to the deserts and the mountain peaks and move from place to place so that you may see how the people's attitude towards the affair develops. Your best judgement will be made when you are facing matters directly. Things will never be more difficult than when you face them indirectly."

"Brother," replied Husayn (a.s.), "You have given advice and shown your concern. I hope that your judgement is correct and well-respected, Allah willing."

Then he entered the mosque repeating to himself these two lines of verse of Yazid bin Mu'awiyah:

"Neither will I offend the grazing cattle in the morning nor shall I be called Yazid. There will never come the day when I will yield submissively and death watches me to back

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off."

Umar bin al-Habib bin al-Talib thus brother spoke to him then and told him the news of his murder. Sayyidun Lawoon said: "A group of people told me on the authority of Umar the genealogist (may Allah be pleased with him) who mentioned that in the last part of his book al-Sha'ir al-Ghurabi a work on genealogy on the authority of his grandfather Muhammad bin Umar who said: 'I have heard my father Umar bin al-Habib bin al-Talib say, narrating my uncle the family of Aqil saying: When my brother Hussein (a.s.) denied the pledge of allegiance to Yazid at Madinah, I feared on him and he was alone. May I be your ransom! Abu Abdullah' I said: 'Your brother Abu Muhammad al-Hasan quoting from his father (a.s.): At that point tears sprang to my eyes and I began to weep loudly. He embraced me and said: 'He told you that I would be killed?'"

"Be it far away O the son of the Apostle of Allah" I said.

"I ask you and invoke Allah before your brother, will he tell you I would be killed?" he insisted.

Yes, I replied: "Why don't you stand face to face with your enemy and pledge your allegiance?"

"My father told me," he assured me, "that the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had told him about his martyrdom and more and that my grave would be near his. Do you think that you know something I do not know? I will not behave basely in the least. Fatimah will certainly meet her father complaining about the maltreatment on the part of his ummah towards her offspring. Surely no one injuring her would enter paradise."⁽⁵⁰⁾

Hussein thus had then the way open to him to leave the city and be apprised of the public mood. He was nevertheless encouraged by his sympathizers who, nevertheless, told him they were afraid he would be killed. His was a will as firm as a towering mountain.

Umm-Salama, one of the Prophet's wives, clung to him

and advised him not to go. Then told him, quoting from the Apostles' words that he would be killed. He informed her soothingly, "Indeed, I know I am going to be killed, mother."⁴⁹ Abdullah bin Umar bin al-Khattab called on him and asked him to reconsider his decision to leave the city, urging him to pledge fealty to Yazid. In response, Hussein refused to alter his resolve for overthrowing the regime. The amir was being treated with grave injustice. How could he ignore that? He thus told Abdullah bin Umar:

*"O Abu Abdul-Rahman! Don't you know that life is so worthless in the eyes of Allah that the head of Yahya bin Zakariya was handed over to a prostitute among the Israelites? Allah indeed granted the Israelites a delay and did not hasten their punishment..."*⁵⁰

FAREWELL TO THE APOSTLE OF ALLAH

After visiting the grave of the Apostle of Allah (s a w) only then did Hussein leave Madinah forever. Never again would he enter the city of his grandfather, nor visit the grave of the last Prophet. The next meeting with him Hussein knew for sure would be in paradise. He would therein be outfitted with the medals of martyrdom and the grief of the calamity.

Hussein (a s) offered two cycles (rak'ahs) of prayer beside the grave of his grandfather Muhammad (s a w) and then raised his hands in supplication.

"O Allah, this is the grave of your Prophet Muhammad (s a w), and I am the son of the daughter of your Prophet. You know what I am going through. O Allah, I love good and detest evil. I beseech you, O the Lord of glory and honour and adjure you by this grave and its contents, to choose for me whatever pleases You and Your apostle."^{71, 72}

The caravan then set off for Makkah⁷³ by crossing the desert. Hussein (a s) was accompanied by his male relatives and devote companions. Also accompanying him were his womenfolk, most notable his illustrious sister Zainab. Initiating the journey he recited the following verse:

﴿مخرج من حبيب يرقب نال ربّ يحيى من لقم الظلّين﴾

71, 72

⁷¹So he went forth therefrom, fearing, awaiting (and) he said: My

Lord! deliver me from the unjust people", (66)

Holy Qur'an (28:21,

On his way to Makkah he met Abdullah bin Muti', who sympathized deeply with him and was haunted by the possibility of Imam Hussein's probable demise and the loss of the only soul who could sort out the problems of the Muslims.

Hopes centered around Hussein(a.s.) and hearts clung to him. There was no figure comparable to him which automatically rendered him the refuge of the Ummah and the actuating force that could challenge uncompromisingly Yazid's power. Hence Abdullah bin Muti' told him:

By Allah should you be killed, we will be enslaved after you."

This statement reflected precisely the opinion of the Islamic world at the time. Abdullah bin Muti' was keenly aware of the oppression and eventual bondage being forced on the Ummah and there was no liberator save Imam Hussein(a.s.). He emphasized this view by again swearing by Allah:

By Allah should you be killed, we would be enslaved after you."

He then asked Hussein(a.s.), in a bid to ascertain his attitude and know his next step, for Hussein's position was that of the Ummah:

"May I be your ransom, what is your destination?" he asked.

"Now, I am going to Makkah. Then, I will ask Allah to guide me", replied Hussein (a.s.).

"May Allah guide you", said bin Muti', "and make us your ransom. After you have arrived in Makkah, do not come near Kufa for it is an ill-fated city, wherein your father was murdered and your brother was betrayed and stabbed with a dagger that brought him well-nigh death. Stick to the Cause of Allah for you are the Lord of the Arabs. The people of Hijaz will never accept a leader except you.

They will hasten to you from every destination. Do not leave the House of Allah: may my paternal cousin and mother's cousin be your ransom. By Allah, should you be killed, we will suffer bondage in your wake."¹

It was a long way to Makkah.² The desert sands were blazing from the heat of the sun. Hussein's caravan penetrated this heat storm, crossing the sandy hills and valleys, the flat stretches. Hussein was following in the footsteps of his father, Ali bin Abi Talib, who had led the caravan of *The Four Fatimahs*,³ challenging the pride of the Quraysh. He was, contrary to the custom of the time, marching during broad daylight.

The spirit of Ali was vibrant in his son. The heart of that undaunted hero beat like a mountainous drum in him. His family and devote followers feared the revenge of the regime. Ibn al-Zubayr, two days earlier, was pursued, but he took a side route, so that his would be assailants lost him. Likewise, his family counselled avoiding the main route as a precautionary measure. By so doing, he could remain outside the grasp of the regime's outstretched hand.

Not surprisingly, Hussein's insisted on taking the main route as a counteraction, an obvious protest and a stimulus to excite the conscience of the ummah. Travellers and people on the whole would wonder: Why did Hussein bid farewell to the city of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), while he is its lord, its son and the protector of its people?⁴ He would not back off. He was bent on challenging

The procession led by Imam Ali (a.s.) when he emigrated from Makkah to Madinah and was accompanied by four women, a known as *Fatrah al-Muhajir*, the Prophet's family namely:

1- Fatimah al-Zahra: the Prophet's daughter

2- Fatimah the daughter of Asad bin Hashem, Imam Ali's mother

3- Fatimah the daughter of al-Zubayr bin Abdul-Mutalib, the Prophet's nursemaid,

4- Fatimah the daughter of Hamzah bin Abdul-Mutalib

ing the authorities. "Why don't you avoid the main road, as Ibn al-Zubayr did, lest the pursuers catch up with you?" asked a member of his family.

"No, by Allah, I will not leave it till Allah judges what he will judge", he replied.¹⁴⁵

The people of Mada'nah met in groups. There were the Muhajirun (immigrants) and the Ansa' (Helpers) among whom were the companions of the Prophet (s a w). They sat discussing the immediate matter of the day. The grandson of the Ansa' of Allah (s a w), had departed the city of his grandfather (s a w). He was undertaking a great task. He firmly refused obedience to Yazid. Why then was the ummah so silent?

In Mada'nah were the houses of Hussein and al-Zabran (s a w), but now the darkness of abandonment fell across them. One scene seemed like a second. Hussein (s a w) left and the city seemed to burst into tears at his sudden absence. The Mada'ni hearts were besieged with grief and their souls fell prey to pain.

They were fearful Hussein (s a w) might be abandoned by his supporters and eventually delivered into the claws of his enemies. The most brilliant of stars would fall from the sky. Those houses were poked in total darkness. His house was deserted. The silent black windows were eyes keeping watch in the night when would Hussein return?

Last yesterday that house was alive with prayer. In its corners echoed the voices of worshippers. There it was the trust and legacy of the Ansa' of Allah (s a w), the abode of al-Zabran (s a w), and the resting family of the Prophet (s a w). Mada'nah then emitted a grieved voice weeping for the departees.

Hussein (s a w) once resided in that house. In that same house was the place the family of the Prophet (s a w) used to sit. There Hussein used to recite expressing his love for Sukamah and al-Rabah.

***"By my life, I love a house, wherein Sakinah and al-Rahab are,
I love them and would give all my wealth, I would never listen to an
blame on that account".*** ۱۵۹.

The house itself was a facet of the protest, a citadel of struggle, a potent voice that would narrate the complete story to the people from the very beginning to the tragic end.

Hussein in the meantime was on his wearisome journey crossing the desert. It was on the third day of the month of Sha'ban that he reached Makkah, reaching

﴿وَبِهِ وَجَّهَ نَفْسَهُ مَدِينَ فَارَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَهْدِيَهُ سُبُوحٌ وَنُصَيْرٌ﴾

۲۲۲۸

"And when he turned his face towards Madyan, he said: May be my Lord will guide me in the right path." ۱۶۰

Holy Qur'an (28: 22)

In the Inviolable Sanctuary

IN THE INVIOLEATE SANCTUARY

Hussein had arrived in the city of the prophetic revelation and peace. He settled in the house of Al-Ash'ath bin Abd al-Muttalib to carry on his political organizing under the authority of the early House of Alib.

Excitement and wonderment was his reward. The people of Makkah and the worshippers who were making Umrah that September all went to receive him. Joyous and most excited were the people. The news of Imam Hussein's arrival at Makkah and his departure from Madinah after rejecting the invitation to Yazid, spread quickly. Delegations in fact, started to arrive from everywhere. He himself began writing letters and dispatching messengers. Hussein also sent messages to Muslims to take up arms and revolt against Yazid's power, and disavow the pledge of allegiance they had given him either through coercion or under the influence of false promises which was contrary to Islamic law.

The process of setting the stage for the uprising began. In different parts of the Muslim world people held public meetings. The arrival of Hussein at Makkah was seen by the Muslims as an omen of coming victory. Likewise, public gatherings were organized in which the situation was analysed. By sitting at Makkah Hussein was planning to:

1. Steering public opinion and assessing the majority's position toward the step taken by him
2. Mobilizing people and analysing the political situation

in the light of Islamic principles concerning the efficacy of administration

1. Drawing up plans to lead the masses and defining the bases of the challenge considering the time, place and most appropriate strategies

4. Accepting the challenge and announcing the downfall of Yazid's regime before establishing a properly guided state under the leadership of the Imam. This state was based on the teachings of Qur'an and Islamic principles

These aims were articulated in his correspondence in verse and prose in response to the questions that were being asked. Ultimately, this step broke the new life in the masses. The spirit of uprising stirred in Iraq, the center of his father's house, the household of the Prophet's wives. At the home of Husayn bin S'ad al-Khuzai, key opposition leaders held a meeting and discussed his political and social conditions, following the death of Mu'awiyah and the passing of power to Yazid. As for Husayn's role, they settled on supporting him and fighting as voluntary soldiers under his leadership. They decided to inform him of that by means of dispatching letters to him. Husayn bin S'ad al-Khuzai rose to his feet and addressed the audience:

"Mu'awiyah has died, he said, and Husayn has withheld his vow. I am saving the people from the massacre and have gone to Makkah. You are his Sh'ah, the people and the Sh'ah of his father. If you know that you will be his helpers and fighters against his enemies and that our lives will be given on behalf of him, then write to him and let him know. But if you fear his treachery and weakness do not tempt him to risk his own life. No, they declared, "Indeed we will fight his enemy and our lives will be given on behalf of him." They wrote to him, he told them. So they wrote him."

In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. We praise Allah before you other than Whom there is no deity

Praise be to Allah Who has broken your enemy – the obstinate tyrant who has leapt upon the ummah, stripped it of its rights, plundered its war booty and seized control of it without consent. Then he has killed the best members of it and preserved its most wicked ones. Now we have no leader. Therefore come through you may Allah unite us under truth. Al-Nu'man bin Bashir is in the governor's palace and we do not gather with him for the Friday or festival prayers. If we learn that you will come to us, we will drive him away until we pursue him to Syria. If Allah the Exalted wills peace, mercy and the blessings of Allah are with you.

"They dispatched the letter with Abdallah bin Sabr al-Hamadani and Abdallah bin Walid. Two nights later, they wrote another letter. In all, the people wrote some 250 letters to him. Then they sent a third messenger urging him to come to them: Shabath bin Rib', Hajar bin Abiur Yazid bin al-Harith, Yazid bin Ruwaym, Urwah bin Qays, Umar bin al-Hajjaj al-Zabidi and Muhammad bin Umayr al-Lamami wrote to him to this effect."⁶⁷

Letters continued to arrive – the authors of which repeated the same lament:

"Now we have no leader. Therefore come through you may Allah unite us under truth and guidance."

Still no other missives they received.

"People are waiting for you. They then again wrote speed, speed."

Husayn(a.s.) for his part wrote a letter to the Kufans calling on them to close ranks and keep their word. The household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) knew already extremely bitter experience – during the times of Imam Ali(a.s.) and his son Hassan(a.s.) – in leading and ruling Iraq.

Husayn(a.s.) chose his paternal cousin Muslim bin Aqeel as his representative, to gauge the situation and evaluate the truth in the Kufans' pledges of loyalty and thus pave the way for their giving the oath of allegiance to him.

The letter read in part,

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
From Hussein bin Ali.

To the leaders of the believers and the Muslims.

Hadi and Sa'ad have brought me your letters: they are the last two of your messengers who have come to me. I have understood everything which you have described and mentioned. The essential statement of the majority of you is: We have no Imam. Therefore come through you, O Allah, with us under truth and guidance. I am sending you my brother, Muslim bin Aqel, who is my cousin and my trustworthy representative from my house. If he writes to me that the opinion of your leaders and of the men of wisdom and merit among you is united in the matter, as the messengers who have come to me have described and as I have read in your letters, I will come to you at once Allah willing. His my life: what is the Imam except one who judges by the Book, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth and one who dedicates himself to the service of Allah".¹⁰¹

Hussein also devoted great attention to the people of Basrah. He sent them a letter that read in part:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allah surely had chosen Muhammad as a leader among his creatures, and honoured him with the prophethood. Allah chose him for his message. He then summoned him, after he advised his servants and conveyed what he was assigned to convey. All his family (those who were appropriate for authority) testamentary trustees, inheritors and the ones most entitled to his status were still alive. But our people (referring to the Umayyads) monopolized the power and we accepted that. But we adjoined distress and deserved peace. While so doing, we knew that we were more entitled to the right that was allotted to us than those who seized it. I am sending you my messenger to hand you this letter. I am calling you to abide by the Book of Allah and the practice of his Prophet (s.a.w.). The way of the Prophet (s.a.w.) has been pushed into obscurity and detraction; brought to the fore. Should you listen to what I have to say and obey me, I will bring you to the path of guidance. May the

peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be with you”

Thus the news of Hussein's move went spread in Basrah a fortress of politics, mosques and the largest Islamic city at the time, next to Kufa. The Basrites were the leaders of the opposition, while public opinion was in the main antagonistic to the Umayyads. Under the governorship of Mu'awiyah the city endured accepted suffering. A meeting was hurriedly held at the house of Mariyya, a woman of the supporters of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). The participants resolved on supporting Hussein (a.s.) and giving him help. They first decided to send him a letter informing him of their decision.

Ibn al-Atheer recorded this meeting in his book *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*⁷.

Some Shia people met in Basrah at a house of a woman from the tribe of Abdul Qays, named Mariyyah, daughter of Sada. She was Shia and opened her house for the Shias as their meeting place. Yazid bin Haneel, from the tribe of Abdul Qays made up his mind to go to Hussein, said:

“Who will go with me?” he addressed his ten sons.

Two of them accepted the offer, Abdulah and Ubaidullah. They went to Makkah and from there, along with Hussein left for Karbala, where they were killed.

Yazid bin Mas'ud, who gathered Banu Tamim, Banu Hanzhalah and Banu Sa'd, addressed them and exhorted them to help Hussein (a.s.). At the same time, he warned them against falling the Imam. A part of his sermon read:

“Yazid, the one who imbibes wine and is a profligate chief, usurped the caliphate and has ruled over the Muslims in accordance to his caprices and without their consent, while being cruel, he is also ignorant and unaware of what is right. He can not even distinguish his own footsteps. By Allah, I swear according to the law that struggling against him is better than fighting the pantheists for the sake of faith.

Another's comparison is Hassan bin Ali the Apostle of Allah is a warrior who has been exhausted by his service. His merit is exhausted because of his service. He is exhausted because of his pasting his services in the path of Allah. The Prophet is a warrior. He is a messenger of Allah and a hope of the Ummah. What an excellent leader he is among his people. He is the Imam whom Allah has sent as a prophet to people and through him the best advice has been given. Do not turn him to the right or to the left and do not go down into the pits of wrong thinking.

Sakhr bin Qays was tired by war in the Battle of Duna'ir, Cam. It is said that you should wish to go to the right to the top of the so-called Apostle of the Prophet is a warrior. By Allah, whoever fails to help him, Allah will make his helpers enemies and his enemies will destroy him and having put on the armour, war is already commenced. If he is killed, we are a nation in death. He who survives will pass away by my hand. May Allah have mercy on you, to give me a satisfactory answer.

O Abu Khalid! said Hani Handharah. We are the army of al-Qaisar and the knights of al-Qaisar. Should you be as easy as I am, why not let your target? Should you let us to enter, then you will be victorious. By Allah you can never win a war with us unless we are faced by us alone. By Allah, we will help you with our swords and protect you with our bodies. Should you decide on going to fight, then do it.

O Abu Khalid! said Hani Handharah. The most despicable thing for us is dishonouring you. Sakhr bin Qays had offered us a condition on fighting, so we accepted peace and preserved our honour. Give us a decree for consultations among ourselves, then we will give you our final decision. O Abu Khalid! Hani Amr bin Tamim declared

"We are Banu Amir, the sons of your father and your allies. We will never be satisfied if you are angry, nor would we settle at home if you choose to leave. The matter is with you to decide. Call us and we will respond to you. Order us and we will obey you. The matter is in your hands."

"O Banu Sa'd, he confirmed, Should you do it (i.e. fail to help Hussein (a.s.)) by Allah, Allah will never lift the sword away from your necks while still you hold your swords".

Then he wrote the following letter to Hussein (a.s.)

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Your letter has arrived and I have understood what you call me to do and what you have invited me to achieve, namely to obey you and do my share in supporting you. Allah never leaves the world without a man who does good and guides to the path of peace. You are the proof of Allah over His creatures and His deposit on His earth. You are a bough of the Muhammadan olive-tree. He is the trunk and you are the branch. Then come to us, may Allah satisfy you. I have convinced Banu Tamim and left them as eager to obey you as the hungry camels to have water after a long and wearisome journey. I have convinced Banu Sa'd and washed the faith from their chests with the rain of a cloud that thundered and flashed lighting."

When Hussein received his letter he praised him

"May Allah make you secure on the day of fear. And bestow dignity on you and satisfy you on the day of the great thirst".

When Yazid bin Mas'ud was ready to join Hussein (a.s.) he received the news of his martyrdom. Al Muntahir bin al-Jarood, on the other hand, took the letter and the messenger with him to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, owing to his fear that the letter might have been a decoy sent by Ubaidullah Bahriyya, the daughter of al-Muntahir was married to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. Ubaidullah crucified the messenger. Then he went on

the pulpit and threatened the people of Basrah with grave punishment for the rumours they spread and the refusal to obey. The next morning he deputized his brother Uthman bin Zayd to rule Basrah, while he himself hurried to the palace of Kufa.⁽⁷⁾

Thus it became clear where to begin the uprising. During the months of Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Thul-Hijjah and during Thul-Hijjah, Imam Hussein was carefully paving the way for an uprising. He had secured the necessary basis of support among the Muslims. Thus when Muslim bin Aqeel read the letter of Hussein to the Kufans, they burst into tears and wept loudly, asking him to hasten to them. Hussein accordingly fixed the time and the place for the revolt, as they were the key preconditions for a successful movement.

With the already enthusiastic response from the Shi'as in Iraq, Hussein decided to move thither and from there he would announce the establishment of the rightly-guided Islamic state. Iraq was the point from where the insurrection would start.

VANGUARD AND LEADERSHIP

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful *

T—Hassan—but A—the Commander of the Faithful (a.s.), from his Shia and the Shia of his father, the Commander of the Faithful. The people are waiting for you. They have no esteem for any man except you. Therefore make haste, for soon the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) will come. The dates have grown green, the fruit has ripened. The earth is covered with fresh grass and the trees are verdant with new foliage. Thus if you want to come to us, you will come to an army which has been gathered for you. Peace, mercy and the blessings of Allah are with you and your father before you. **

Hussein (a.s.) received this as a letter and pondered over it. Then he asked the courtiers about those who gathered to write it. As it was a pledge of a legitimate and clearly established a good estimation of the situation. ** Two messengers named the men responsible for sending the letter.

The conditions were well described and the letter gave him proof of a propitious moment in which to move. But he was not yet sure. The household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) had before had bitter experience with such pious and promises. He shared such an experience with his father, the Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) and his brother Hassan (a.s.). His was a fateful action and he had to make a wise decision.

With this purpose in mind, Hussein (a.s.) went to the Holy House of Allah. Patiently and calmly he offered two

rak'ahs of prayer between the Polar and the Stand of Ibrahim (a.s.) and asked Allah to guide him on the path leading to prosperity and success.

Hussein (a.s.) deemed it necessary to send as his representative a man to prepare everything for him and inform him of fresh developments. Accordingly, he would be able to decide the next step. He had designated a courageous man to carry out that responsibility. One who was wise and unflinching by standards to the Apostle of Arabia as was the Imam and the Ummah. He chose his paternal cousin Muslim bin Aqeel. He sent for him and Muslim hurried to meet the Imam, who explained the circumstances and the contents of the letters sent to him. He informed him at length of the details of his assignment, so he would be capable of fully discharging his duty.

Muslim accepted the onerous task and listened attentively to the instructions of Hussein (a.s.).

"He ordered him to guard against evil, to keep his affair secret and work quietly. When, upon realising that the people were united to support him, he had to hasten to inform him of that."

Hussein handed over the letter he had written to Muslim and ordered him:

"Go to the Kufans. If it is true what they had mentioned in their letters, tell me all about it, then I can join you."

Muslim headed towards Iraq from Makkah on the 5th of the the month of Ramadhan, in the year 60 A.H., accompanied by a group of close companions and two guides. It was summer and extremely hot. The sun was burning. The road was long and the journey was particularly difficult.

It took them twenty days to travel from Makkah to Kufa. Muslim arrived in Kufa on the 5th of the month of Shawwal. He had met many dangers in the expansive desert he crossed. One night the two guides lost the way, so they travelled aimlessly. However, when the sun rose, they again found the

trail. Now thirst and weariness had overcome them. Most frustrating of all, they were short of water. The two guides were completely worn out.

They indicated the path to him after it again appeared clear to them. Muslim continued his journey and the two guides died of thirst" (75).

Muslim could do nothing concerning the fate of his precious guides with them. He was compelled to pursue his journey along with his companions following the trail markers indicated by the two guides. They covered a long distance when they discovered an oasis, dismounted and cammed their camels. They were completely exhausted and deeply distressed over the loss of the guides.

Muslim searched for the water which was known as al-Murayghat al-Bahar al-Khafil. From there he wrote to Husayn(a.s.) informing him of the dangers they had encountered at that point. He added that he was waiting for further instructions in order to proceed with his task, adding how distressed he was to remove him from the assignment, if he so wished.

Later on the letter passed entrusted to a man from the Banu al-Harith al-Qaysiyya Muslim to deliver it to Husayn(a.s.) at Makkah. Upon receiving the letter Husayn(a.s.) returned a swift answer to Muslim ordering him to pursue his journey, assuring him of being relieved.

Not soon after the letter of Husayn(a.s.) arrive, then Muslim was sent on. On his way he reached an oasis where the Banu al-Harith al-Qaysiyya were. He stayed here for some time, then went on with his companions for he arrived in Kufa, as stated by Muslim in the Kitab al-Shawa'id. He was hosted by al Mukhtar al-Bakri, the leader of the Banu al-Harith al-Qaysiyya. He made that house the base of his political activities.

Muslim was thus messenger of Husayn(a.s.) and representing his leadership. The people eagerly hastened to receive him and declare their loyalty to him.

Muslim began to contact a variety of people and commenced his political activities energetically and patiently. He gathered supporters around him, imposed discipline and took the pledge of fealty from them on behalf of Hussein (as). Tens of delegations declared their loyalty to Hussein (as). The masses were so moved that while listening to the letter of Hussein (as) being read by Muslim, tears welled in their eyes.

Muslim was able to gather a large number of people. Those who pledged the allegiance succeeded the army in numbers. He has a strong base of support and through this huge force can overcome any difficulties, no matter how great and far-reaching they were. At that point he began sending letters to Hussein (as), in which he described a favorable picture of his position and the conditions in Kufa, urging Hussein to come.

People continued flocking in to make their loyalty to Muslim. Soon that wave of devotion turned into a storm. A potent political change that threatened the central government. This was no secret to Yazid and his governor in Kufa, al-Nu'man bin Hashir. Al-Nu'man attempted to deal with the situation peacefully and stem the wave of support of Muslim, but in vain.

The policy adopted by al-Nu'man did not appeal to the agents of the government. They feared the rapid changes in events would ultimately endanger the social, economic and political privileges they were enjoying at the expense of the masses. Hence one of the allies of the Umayyads, Abdurrahman bin Muslim, reported to Yazid the critical situation and dangerous turn of events. He advised him to depose al-Nu'man, whom he described as weak and compromising. In his stead, he suggested a terrorist element had to be sent to Kufa who could put the situation under control by forcefully crushing popular will. Similar reports were dispatched to

Yazid by various agents of the Umayyads such as Anas ibn Aqaba and Umar ibn Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas.

The first report read in part:

Mu'awiyah bin Aqeeq has come to Kufa and the Shu'ba have pledged allegiance to him on behalf of Hassen bin Ali bin Abi Talib. If you have any need for Kufa then select a strong man who will carry out your orders and act in the same way as you would against your enemy. Regrettably al-Nu'man is a weak man, or he is acting like a weak man.

Kufa was seething with first-piled events, and was a stage on which two currents were furiously fighting each other. The supporters of the househead of the Prophet (s.w.a.) and those of the Umayyads. The situation was at the point of imminent explosion. Yazid had reached the brink of being toppled, only the rescue of certain factors that tipped the scale in his favour.

Messengers hurried from Kufa to Hesseent's and Yazid took each of them at the word and quickly. The couriers were ordered to Yazid, who warned him that an enormous storm was gathering momentum in Kufa. In the case of such a great storm, al-Nu'man could not do so, so something urgent had to be done.

Yazid grasped the scope of the danger in Kufa. He hurried to call for someone who was quick to act and ruthless and ruthless was the Kufans. His person had to be one who could do anything, would do anything at all cost. He should have been the man of the househead of the Prophet (s.w.a.) and the enemy of the Umayyads. After lengthy consultations, he could find no one better than Umar ibn Zayd, who was the governor of Basra at the time.

Yazid jumped at this opportunity, relying on the advice of Sarra bin Zayd, who told him Mu'awiyah had before his death appointed Umar ibn Zayd as the governor of Kufa and that he still had the decree in his possession.

It was time the decree was put into effect, as there was no man, in the entirety of the state, who could match him in his loyalty to the Umayyad throne.

Yazid accepted this suggestion at once and ordered Ubaidullah to take control of the administration of Kufa and treat the populace violently and savagely. He was not to hesitate even if it was necessary to shed blood, so as to uproot the opposition and defuse the revolutionary current in Kufa.

Yazid's letter read in part:

"My followers among the people of Kufa have informed me that Ibn Aqeel is there gathering troops in order to create division among the Muslims. Therefore, when you read this letter of mine, go to Kufa and search for Ibn Aqeel as if you were looking for a head, until you find him. Then, bind him in chains, kill him, or execute him. Wassalam."

DESPAIR

Umm al-Han Zayd received Yazid's letter and on the following day hurriedly set out for Kufa where the people were waiting for Hussein and readying to receive him. They had been waiting for him for many years and never seen Hussein as a ruler. Umm al-Han Zayd took advantage of this and entered the city disguising himself. He had a black turban on his head and covered his face with a veil. Thus was he hurriedly received and escorted by the Kufans when moving through the streets of the city on his arrival. He was greeted everywhere.

"Welcome, son of the Apostle of Allah! your arrival is a blessed event!"

Most of the people who were there hurried toward the governor's palace. When the governor saw the masses who were there, he struck an attitude of how the people were longing to meet Hussein and the situation and their hatred of Yazid and how weak in the after. His escort Mushim bin A'warah Al-Hadrami decided to take the people by surprise and seek them so that he could bring them to their hearts so he called: "Make room! This is the governor, Ubaydallah bin Zayd."

He hurried toward the governor's mansion, surrounded by crowds of people who were entirely deceived by him, still mistaking him for Hussein (a.s.). A Nu'man man who was trembling in his palace. He went to the ba-

very indignant down to Uhart, thinking him to be Hussaini as is the people thought. "Make A'ahbet-re you unless you withdraw from us. By A'ah I will not have ever my back to you, and I have no wish to fight you."

Ibn Zayid kept his promise as usual. He was drawing close to the town of the palace, where Nu'mat was still applying the same treatment to the newcomers upon reaching them. It was none other than Ibn Zayid, he opened the gate for him. Ibn Zayid there (I passed the night there) Kuta was awaiting a tremendous turn of events.

On the following day, Ibn Zayid, faced on the people from the government's side, once gathered the congregation to a prayer. He addressed the crowds, promising the obedient abundant rewards and threatening the opponents and dissenters with severe punishment. He then said: "I will use the whip and the sword against those who abandon my commands and oppose my appointment" 36.

Then he delegated agents to spy and report to him the names of the opposition activists. He warned there would be severe consequences for those who disobeyed, including suspension of state appointments, fines and rewards. He said in this respect,

"Whoever of you reports to us of the dissidents he will be free from harm. But those of you who do not cooperate will have to guarantee that there is no opponent in his group who may oppose us and no wrongdoer who will try to wrong us. Anyone who does not do so will be denied protection and his blood and property will be lawful for us to take. Any leader in whose group is a partisan for Hussaini as, who has not been reported to us, will be crucified at the door of his house and we will abolish the dependents of that group."

That was the point at which events took another turn. Despair and frustration appeared to have penetrated the souls of the masses. Kuta and its leaders, who had at this time Ibn Zayid was busy asserting his authority by brainwashing a

club in the face of the citizenry. He resorted to bribery, oppression, establishing a network of spies to gather information, fabricating and spreading rumours and propagandizing on behalf of Yazid. These were the means by which the Umayyad dictators solidified their power.

Muslim bin Aqeel's position began to founder. He was thus forced to adopt a different mode of action. In line with this, he moved from the house of al-Mukhtar bin Ubayyah al-Thaqafi to the house of the prominent Kufan elder, Ham bin Urwah, who was one of the staunch loyalists of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). He went into hiding there, outside the reach of the agents of the governor. But unfortunately, the network of agents discovered his hiding place. Meanwhile, Ham bin Urwah was calmly summoned to the palace. A delegation came on him at his house and informed him that Umar ibn al-Khattab desired to mend fences between them. He hardly stepped into the palace when he found himself standing before a court levelling charges against him.

There were several spies who testified that he was supporting Husayn's cause, mobilising people on his behalf. He was accused of organizing the opposition and collecting the needed money, men and arms. Apart from planning to topple the regime, he was charged with concealing Muslim bin Aqeel in his house. He tried to defend himself, but was taken by surprise when Ubayd Allah bin Zayd attacked him with a cane, breaking his nose and causing heavy bleeding. Ham could not defend himself in the power of his enemy. Eventually he was taken to one of the rooms therein and held under tight watch.

Mithaq (the tribe of Ham) heard of the incident and they moved to defend him, besieging the palace. Ibn Zayd resorted to deception. He sent the widge Shurayh to calm them down by informing them that Ham was safe. He did so and the crowds dispersed.

Kufa was now caught in a violent, bloody and armed

strife between the two sides. News of these developments spread from mouth to mouth. Rumours were also circulating of a great army from Syria for the purpose of overpowering the people, crushing the opposition and punishing Muslim bin Aqel and his followers. The calculated result was that weakness and betrayal slipped into the ranks of the revolutionaries and they soon lacked the opposition movement.

Muslim bin Aqel in the meantime adopted a policy of non-resistance. He decided on attacking the government's palace taking his force and toppling the government of Ubaid Allah bin Zayad. He gathered his men and supporters who had given him their pledge of allegiance and they as his brothers (Uyayyurukun) and attacked the palace. His force was at the beginning far more powerful than the police. Thus bin Zayad and his followers were obliged to flee, pulling its doors from there he started circulating his agents among the people spreading rumours and pretending to be a part of them. The government was ordered them to keep calm and avoid bloodshed warning them that there was an enemy army on its way to Kufa from Syria. It may be that the government was not so firm and weak and the situation was more Muslim's favour. The people consequently began to abandon Muslim. When he left that night he was very effat and he. There was not the mosque in the prayer. When he was in the mosque at about 4.00 a.m. Muslim ended his prayer. When he turned back he found that the men in the way of prayer looking for him in the city. Muslim's only friend from among those in the mosque of Kufa. He did not know where to go nor did he know anyone to ask for help.

That was not the easy, a highly typical and remarkable situation demanding strength and courage equalled by sympathy with the circumstances. Muslim with a great and resolute determination to continue on the path he had chosen as

the representative of Imam Hussein (a.s.) He walked through the streets of Kufa seeking a way out of his dilemma of finding the way out of the city before being arrested. Now he was thinking of Hussein (a.s.), if only he could reach him and inform him of the latest events and prevent him from coming to Kufa.

The streets and alleys of the city appeared virtually abandoned. Terror loomed there. Agents were in pursuit of the deputy of Hussein (a.s.). He finally came to a house, at the threshold of which a girl of a woman was standing. She was called Tawale. That name was to be perpetually mentioned by history. He stood there at a loss and embarrassed. He asked for water. She brought him water. After satisfying his thirst he sat on the doorstep, engrossed in thought.

His appearance, the signs of his being a stranger and his sitting there stirred her curiosity. So she asked him whether he had not taken water. In reply, he said he was a homeless stranger and had no acquaintances, then asked introducing himself.

"I am Muslim bin Aqeel, the ambassador of Hussein, his messenger to Kufa and his cousin."

She allowed him to enter her house. He passed the night there, mulling, waiting for the following day.

Ibn Ziyad, by the meantime, was informed of the fate of the resistance led by Muslim. Now he was preparing to deliver his bow. He ordered his *mu'aththam* (the caller to prayer) to announce:

"There will be no guarantees of security for any man of the people, the group leaders, the supporters and the fighters who prayed the night prayer anywhere except in the mosque."

Out of fear, numerous groups of people began to flood the courtyard till it was completely filled. Ibn Ziyad led them to the night prayer. He then mounted the pulpit and began to warn the people by threatening them. In his speech, he

attacked Muslim bitterly. He said:

"O Abu Qatada! That stupid and ignorant man has attempted the opposition and rebellion in which you have seen. There will be no success for him. Allah is the man in whose house we find him. Whoever surrenders him will have the reward for his blood. Fear Allah, you servants of Allah and keep to obedience and your pledge of allegiance. Do not do anything which will work against yourselves."

"O Haseem bin Numayr! Your mother will see you if you sit at the gates of the lanes of Kufa and a person of his clan gets away and you do not bring him. We will give you the authority over the house of the inhabitants of Kufa. Send look-outs to inspect people in the lanes. Tomorrow morning clear out the people from their houses and search them thoroughly so that you bring this man to me".⁽⁸⁾

Thus Ibn Ziad gave his orders for the houses to be completely searched in quest of Muslim who was the only thing at the house of the woman maid and Lawah waiting for a chance to flee or make contact with someone who would lend him help.

As fate would have it, as Ibn Lawah knew of Muslim's hiding place, on that day of fear and hope for reward, hastened Ibn Ziad. Subsequently a detachment of 70 soldiers arrived and laid siege to the house.

Muslim distinctly heard the clatter of the horses' hooves and the voices of the men. He prepared himself to face them. The soldiers broke into the house but Muslim did not surrender. He fought bravely and charged at them fearlessly. They were taken aback by the recklessness of his attack and retreated out of the house.

The men then in order to tire him resorted to a new tactic. They began to throw fire and stones from the surrounding rooftops. He had no choice but to leave the building. Outside in the day he fought ferociously. Eventually he was seriously injured and his face and body were covered with

wounds and blood. They called out, "You are granted security. Do not destroy yourself." Muslim accepted the offer. He went with them in a mule to the governor's palace. But they had already broken their promise to him when they stripped him of his sword. Finally he was brought in front of Ibn Ziyad. Mas'um did not greet him with the respect due a governor. In the presence of the tyrant, Mas'um never felt fear. On the contrary he was as he always had been, strong-willed and indignant. The two exchanged angry words, ended by Ibn Ziyad saying indignantly, "You are going to be killed."

"Then allow me to make my will," replied Muslim. He chose Umar b'n Sa'd to write out his will, due to the kinship between them.

Muslim raised three points in that document: "In a corner, near Ibn Ziyad, Mas'um finished his will, but Ibn Sa'd joined Ibn Ziyad, and began to divulge the contents of the will, made to mock at it. Ibn Ziyad resumed his attack of curses and cheap accusations against Muslim. Muslim, on a sharp contrivance, to retort boldly and fearlessly.

He was given guarantees of security but these were not kept. Ibn Ziyad could not leave Mas'um alive, because Mas'um was the one who had come to Kufa to challenge his authority, and now the opportunity came to avenge himself against him.

Ibn Ziyad thundered orders to his bodyguards to take Muslim to the roof of the palace: "Take the sword, Ibn Ziyad said to Bakr b'n Hamran, whom Muslim had seriously wounded, and behead him. Then throw his body and his head down." Muslim was subsequently taken to the roof of the palace, where repeating "Allah is the greatest," to attain martyrdom, in high spirits and contentment.

The sword came down to sever the head from his kneeling body. Muslim thus joined the great caravan of martyrs, believers, prophets and the righteous. Then came the turn of

Ilani bin Urwah, who was taken chained to *Souq al-Ghanam* (The Sheep's Market) and decapitated. The heads of Muslem and Ilani were dispatched to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah.

As for the bodies, they were tied with ropes and dragged through the streets and bazaars of Kufa. That was the bitter end of the first round of the uprising, that ultimately would turn into a huge volcano, destined to sweep from history the thrones that were erected on the skulls of the caliphs to faith and the revolutionaries.

To Karbala'

TO KARBALA'

Muslim had been immersed in gathering supporters and taking the pledge of allegiance from the Kufans on behalf of Hussein (a.s.). At Kufa he had been rigorously explaining objectives of the Hussein movement and setting forth his moves behind the uprising. The masses of Kufa, its leaders and outstanding citizens initially were enthusiastically declaring their support for the great leader Imam Hussein bin Ali (a.s.). Declarations of help were continuously conveyed to him, that was why Muslim finally became convinced that the situation was ripe to begin the uprising and with this conclusion in mind, he had written to Imam Hussein, urging him to come to Kufa.

Hussein bin Ali (a.s.) thus received Muslim's letter in which there was a clear description of the political circumstances in Kufa and encouraging news regarding public opinion. Upon reading the letter, he settled on heading towards Kufa from Makkah, to begin from there leading the people against the tyranny of Yazid. Hussein (a.s.) decided to leave. He gathered his womenfolk, children, sons, his brother's sons, his uncle's sons and reached to begin his long journey.

Soon, the news of his impending departure spread and the hearts of the people hovered over Hussein (a.s.), clinging to him, seeking to persuade him not to leave. They were all afraid that He might not return to them. One after the other,

the people's representative Hussain's request to change his decision.

He however refused and returned to Mecca with Yazid on forced advice. He exhibited his wish to me. With Islam endangered, who else I wish to sitting. Was there any alternative apart from this? Decidedly not. Yazid on the other hand would not make peace with a man true to his principles like Hussain's. The ummah that asked to Hussain's leadership would never would lose faith in him if he made peace with Yazid. The Muslims would resort to submission in the end. If they would see the peace as a legitimate and the legitimacy of Yazid's government, Hussain was therefore the stone's according to which the ummah could judge the regime's legitimacy.

Hussain's decision was reasonable. For this reason he only refused to accept the suggestions of Umar bin Abdul Rahman and Fu'ayl bin Usaym, Muhammad bin A'Hamriyah bin al-Harith, Abdullah bin Abbas and A'warah bin Abbas. He even refused to accept security from Amir al-Suddat al-Aws Yazid's governor Makkah offered him through Ju'ayl bin al-Harith. He informed him openly that there was a secret and a real objective behind his decision, which he could not reveal.

Imam Hussain said to Abdullah

"I had a dream. I saw the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). He ordered me to do something, only I am entitled to carry it out."

What is that dream about? asked Abdullah.

Hussain (a.s.) replied,

"I will not divulge it or confide it to anyone, till I meet Allah."

There was certainly a great secret and a truth behind his uprising. If we read the dialogue between Hussain (a.s.) and those who attempted to persuade him to stay in Makkah, we will conclude that Hussain (a.s.) had a sublime goal in mind.

He said the others realised from the very beginning that the Kalbīs would fail him and he would be left on his own. All this was abundantly clear to Hussein (r.s.) but his religious duty urged him to save the people of Ummayyad, no matter what the cost was.

Accordingly, he set off on the Saturday of Thul-Hijjah 60 A.H. heading towards Iraq and did not receive the letter of Muslim bin Aqeel in which he exhorted him to have to kill. All those who met him on his journey advised him to return to Makkah. He would reply:

*"By Allah, they will not leave me till they tear the very heart from the depths of my chest. When they do that, Allah will give power to someone over them who will humiliate them. They will be more humiliated than even a woman's menstrual cloth."*⁴⁵

He said to Abdallah bin al-Zubayr:

"My father told me that there will be a sheep⁴⁶, on account of which Makkah will be desecrated. I never desire to be that sheep."

Then Hussein (r.s.) added:

*"By Allah, should I be killed a span's distance away from Makkah, that would be more desirable for me than being killed in it. And should I be killed two spans' distance away from it that would be more desirable for me than being killed a span's distance from it. By Allah, even if I go into hiding in an insect's hole, they will flush me out to kill me!"*⁴⁷

Everything was thus clear for Hussein. He was quite sure that only through martyrdom could he achieve his great objective and that the uprising was an unavoidable historical necessity.

Those who voiced objections to Hussein's decision took into account two key points:

1. They were afraid lest the Muslim Ummah lose its righteous leadership. The stage would be Yazid's to do whatever

he departed with the ummah and its wealth. This poem was thus as in Arabic: Ibn al-Mutazz composed it. Hussein was where he was set to find quarter on his way to Kufa.

By Allah, should you be killed, we would be martyred after you.²⁰⁰⁹¹

2. They considered victory only in terms of assuming power, after crushing the enemy's military force. In contrast, Hussein's whole life was the success in leading the ummah on the right path and perseverance in it. Once the path was made clear to the ummah, it was a known fact that he was its ruler and that would be a source of a great power, latent in the presence of the ummah. That force had blown martyrism and heroism to its highest base.

The people thought the existence of Husayn Hussein among them was a necessity, while Husayn regarded sacrifice and martyrdom at his enemy's extreme necessity.

The people took the view that Hussein's was a noble military life, putting down the regime, so he had to leave the military choice. Hussein was of the view that a king's military force could be compensated by his noble blood. As a result, his voice would echo forever and the particles of the sand that were soaked with his blood would be in arms fighting oppression forever. That is why he is regarded as the lord of the martyrs.

Hussein set out on the 10th of Muharram. The governor of Hira, Amru bin Sa'ad bin al-Aas heard that and he sent a group of his men to block his way. Hussein faced them valiantly and the two sides exchanged blows of whips and as a result, Ibn al-Aas withdrew.

At al-Farrah on his way to Kufa, they saw camels heading towards Syria, carrying gifts to Yazid bin Mu'awiyah. They were coming from Yemen. Hussein's companions regarded them as booty of war. Hussein by then was at war with Yazid. He was most kind with the owners of these camels and

gave them an amount of money for their camels. He asked them to join him and some of them accepted the offer while the rest resumed their journey.

At al-Battah, another stage on the route to Kufa, he met the well-known poet al-Farazdaq. Hussein asked him to write them of the general situation at Kufa, to which al-Farazdaq replied:

"The hearts of the people are with you but their swords are against you. The decision comes from Heaven and Allah does what he wishes."

Imam Hussein (a.s.) said:

"You have spoken truly of the affair belonging to Allah. Every moment He is in a state of glory. If fate sends down what we like, we praise Allah for His blessings. He is the One from Whom help should be sought. However, although fate may frustrate our hopes, yet, it does not destroy the souls of those whose intention is the truth and whose hearts are pious".⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

The news of Hussein's decision spread among the people. The regime was most worried lest he succeed in toppling the throne of Yazid. The people of Hira and Iraq began to stir on the route leading to the revolt. On the way to Kufa, at every point, a group of people would join Hussein (a.s.). Ubaidullah bin Zayad was made aware of the beginning of Hussein's movements. He, on his part, gathered his men and devised a plan to block the way to Kufa. He sent his chief of security, Hossayn bin Numayr, at the head of a military force to carry out his plan. Ibn Numayr chose a strategically important point between Medina and Hussein's route. He camped at Qadisiyah and made it his base. His troops took up position between al-Qadisiyah to Kufa and Qadisiyah to the mountain of La'la.

In the meantime, Hussein (a.s.) was approaching a Hauri, from where he wrote a letter to the Kufis arguing them to stand fast and informing them of his arrival.

Map showing the place Hussein's caravan passed on the way from Makkah to Karbala. Quoted from *Abdu'l-Karim al-Qazwini, Al-Wathaiq al-Rumayyah fi-Thawrat al-Imam al-Husayn*.



He (a.s.) folded this letter and handed it to Qays bin Musahhir al Saydawi who set off for Kufa. Unfortunately, he could not penetrate the lines of troops positioned outside Kufa. He was captured and carried before 'Abdullah bin Yazid. Qays never wavered and defiantly stood in front of Ibn Ziyad who ordered him to curse Husseina (a.s.) from the pulpit. He thereupon took the pulpit, violently attacked 'Abdullah and urged the people to support Husseina (a.s.). 'Abdullah was by then furiously angry. He ordered his bodyguards to take him to the top of the palace and throw him down. They did so. Qays was propelled to the ground and thus attained martyrdom.

At Kufa, 'Abdullah moved swiftly to crush the lingering seeds of opposition. Through bribes, spies and terror he continued to weaken the movement. Muslim bin Aqeel and Hamid bin Urwah were already killed while al Mukhtar bin 'Abdullah al Thaqafi languished in prison.

Husseina (a.s.) was unaware of the latest developments and therefore dispatched Abdullah bin Yaqtar²² to Muslim bin Aqeel. At a place known as al Thalabisyah, Husseina (a.s.) was finally informed of the breakdown of the uprising and the martyrdom of Muslim bin Aqeel. His messenger, 'Abdullah bin Yaqtar, was captured by Ibn Numayr's soldiers and then transferred to Kufa to face 'Abdullah bin Zayad.

Ibn Yaqtar was, as his predecessor, a paradigm of courage and bravery. He likewise was ordered to curse Husseina (a.s.) from the pulpit. And in the same way he cursed 'Abdullah bin Zayad and exhorted the people to get ready to support Husseina (a.s.). Upstaged by Abdullah's steadfastness, 'Abdullah ordered him to be thrown down from the highest peak of the palace roof. Upon surviving that, one of the bodyguard of 'Abdullah, hastened to behead him.

It was at Zuhrah that Husseina (a.s.) heard of the arrest and subsequent murder of his messenger and then the news

of the failure of the uprising. He was then sure that those who called him a liar were right. A prophet had given him a pledge of loyalty had broken their vows and misled him. There was an urgent need to convey the account of events to his companions. He addressed them, perceiving the lack of faith of them so they could believe for themselves.

"The Qur'an have directed us: I know of you who prefer to leave us, may do so freely and without guilt. They dispersed from him right and left, and there were only left with him those who had come with him from Makkah", (10)

Hussein (a.s) passed that night at Zubayr, thinking of Makkah, Hira and Ashullat. The Yaghtar people were the future of the ummah. A daybreak, he was away from the place. They passed the Bar al Aqabah and entered the desert to reach the place called Shu'ayb's sons. Hussein and his companions camped there for the night. Hussein was exhausted and in need of rest.

On the following day, they started for Hira. The sun was climbing in the sky and the heat was unbearable. A scout told him one of the troops saw black spears in the distance. At first he thought them to be palm tree orchards. Hussein said: Allah is the greatest. Hussein's eyes were with him some sentence and asked him: "Who did you say Allah is the greatest?" In response, they the man replied: The scouts presumed that they had entered in Iraq. What Hussein's men saw were not palm trees, nor Iraq's orchards, but actually black spears in the move. They were soldiers, horses, spears, banners and flags, rising from the bushes, bushes. In this area there is a single palm tree. Five imperialists wandered around: "What do you see then?" Hussein inquired. By Allah we see soldiers and horses," they told him. "By Allah, I am sure that you will see Hussein's army."

Hussein's army was caught up behind with surprised charge from marching. Hussein's army from the desert. Hussein questioned his men

"Is there any place we can put at our rear, so that we face them in only one direction?" They went up the mountain of *Tha' Hasi* as a suitable place. The group headed towards the mountain which was on their left. The enemy army composed of about 1000 horsemen led by *Hur bin Yazid al-Rihabi* was persistently moving towards them. *Hur* gave the orders to surround *Hussein (a.s.)* and his followers. In the meantime, he was vying with the smaller band to occupy the strategic mountain position but *Hussein(a.s.)* reached the place before him and camped there.

It was midday and extremely hot. The sand was burning, the horses panting with thirst, while the men were tired and parched. In spite of all this, *Hur* commanded them to lay siege to *Hussein(a.s.)* and his followers. *Hussein(a.s.)* to the contrary, treated them kindly in a way reminiscent of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) and how he had treated the people of Makkah when the city fell into his hands.

Hussein ordered his followers to provide them and their horses with water. He even went to the extent of carrying water to the dry throats among the army of al-*Hur*. Both man and beast quenched their thirst. It was by then, time for the noon prayer. *Hussein(a.s.)* commanded al-*Hur* bin *Musriq* to call for the prayer and delivered a speech to both camps explaining to *Hur* and his men his overall attitude and final objective. Then he called on them to adhere to their promises and testaments as these were the people of Iraq. He reminded them of their letters and the tens of messengers they had dispatched to him. During his speech *Hur's* men kept silent.

Hussein(a.s.) led both camps in prayer. When the prayer was over, both sides remained in their positions. Before performing his afternoon prayer, *Hussein* made another speech. Before that, he emptied two saddlebags full of letters and documents sent to him from Iraq. He then ordered his fol-

"Men are travelling and death travels towards them". Then I knew it was our own souls announcing our deaths to us."

"Father", asked Ali

"May Allah never show you evil, are we not in the right?"

"Indeed we are", he answered. "By Him to Whom all His servants must return".

"Father", said Ali: *"Then we need have no concern if we are going to die righteously."*

"May Allah give you the best reward a son can get for his behaviour towards his father" answered Hussein.

After offering his dawn prayer, Hussein travelled away from the direction of Kufa, keeping to the left. He eventually he arrived at Naynawa. At Naynawa, which was a strategic village, events took a sudden and vicious turn. Hussein, Ali and Hus were both surprised when a letter arrived from Ubaydullah bin Zayad. It was a strong worded letter carrying the bad news of something destructive to come.

The missive read in part

"When this letter of mine arrives and my messenger comes to you, tell Hussein, Ali and Hus to halt. But only let him stop in an open place, with no vegetation or water. I have ordered my messenger to stay with you and not take your leave until he brings the news of your carrying out my instructions. Wassalam" 107

Hur read the letter slowly and carefully, then he approached Hussein, Ali and Hus and reread the letter to him. Hussein responded: *"Then let us stop at Naynawa, al Ghachiriyah or Shutayyah."* Hur refused that demand on the pretext that he feared the spies in his army. Zubayr bin al Qayn¹⁰⁸ then suggested that Hussein, Ali and Hus head for a nearby place called *al Aqr*, but Hussein refused that. He persisted on travelling.

Before departing, he once again addressed his followers:

"No doubt you are aware of the gravity of the situation which you are witnessing yourselves here and now. Life has certainly

changed disguises and its good has gone for ever. This has continued till the remaining good in it amounts to the thin sediment at the bottom of a drinking utensil. Life is a mean food, like a pasture covered with bad grass. Do you not see that the truth is not followed and falsehood not discouraged? The faithful must certainly desire to meet his Lord righteously. I do not deem death other than martyrdom and life among the unjust other than suffering and boredom⁹³, (198).

THE PROMISED LAND

It was not long before the Umayyad army blocked the march of Imam Hussein(a.s.) and his followers. Hussein(a.s.) hereupon asked the name of the location.

What is this place called?, he questioned.

"The land of Taf", they told him.

"Is there another name by which it is known?", he asked again.

"It is called Karbala", they told him.

"I bid, I fly for refuge from affliction (karb) and calamity (bala)", he said and then added: *"this is a place of affliction and calamity. Dismount for here is the end of our journey, the place where our blood will be shed, the place of our graves. That is what my grandfather had told me."*²⁹⁽¹⁷⁾

It was Thursday, the 2nd of Muharram of A.H. 60. Hussein and his companions dismounted and camped there (i.e. the land of sacrifice).

The Imam erected his tent and sat preparing his sword while repeating:

"Time, shame on you as a friend! How many ups and downs do you possess? How many a companion or a seeker will be dead! I line will not be satisfied with any substitute. Every living creature will have to journey along my path. How near it is to departure. Surely the matter rests with the Mighty One".³⁰

Hussein(a.s.) was repeating that, while Zaynab, his sister

and the standard bearer who would afterwards carry his revolutionary message, was listening to him with a receptive She called out in a frightened and passionate tone

"This is what one who is sure of his approaching death would say"

"Indeed, sister" said he *"O for your bereavement",* she lamented. *"Hussein a.s. is telling me about his death."*³

Ubadullah meanwhile rushed reinforcements to the area. One of the men he selected against Hussein was Umar bin Sa'd, who at first asked if he relieved of the heavy task. Hussein decided that Ubadullah's desire, when he later threatened to desert, was in the governor's shirt. At Ray, Umar had been struggling with two evil sons. So Hussein said, the best of this was to release him to divert him away and refrain from war with Hussein. Umar bin Sa'd then triumphed and he decided to take part in the battle against him.

He expressed that struggle in two lines of verse:

Could I decline the governorship of a Ray, while this is my dream, I should I return home for killing Hussein. Should I wish him then I wind up in the box, while Hussein, while the governorship of a Ray is the refreshment of my eye.

He decided to carry out that task and advanced to Naynawa. The head of an army of about 4,000 soldiers, Ubadullah, Umar bin Sa'd surrounded Hussein's camp. Hussein's 17 began negotiations with him, and he had several meetings. As a result, he wrote to Ubadullah bin Ziyad suggesting lifting the siege of Hussein's camp and allowing him to return from where he had come, thus halting the impending shedding of blood. The suggestion, in fact, was discussed between him and Hussein (a.s.), and both of them accepted it.

Ubadullah received the letter. Even he at first

appreciated, he did not want to put it into effect. But then a Shūmī – Thil Jawshan – of the kind mentioned Husseiniy – warned him of the consequences. He told him that once Husseiniy – reached Jawshan he would be some distance – and that the scales would eventually tip in his favour. Thus – it was necessary to take advantage of the situation and force Husseiniy – to give the oath of fealty and yield to his will. This – suggestion was the plan that changed the course of events and brought the tragedy about.

Thus are many historically important events initiated with marginal attitudes. The suggestion of al Shūmī falls into this category. It led to the martyrdom of Husseiniy – created a series of afflictions for the ummah and ended in the collapse of the Umayyad state.

Ubadullah accepted the suggestion of al Shūmī and handed him a threatening letter to be delivered to Umar bin Sa'd. The letter read in part:

"I did not send you to Husseiniy to refrain from fighting him, to idle the time away with him, to promise him peace and preservation of his life, to make excuses for him, nor to be an intercessor on his behalf with me. Therefore, see to it that if Husseiniy and his followers submit to my authority and surrender, you send them to me in peace. If they refuse, then march against them to fight them and to punish them, for they deserve that. If Husseiniy is killed, make the horses trample on his body, both front and back, for he is a disobedient rebel and I do not consider that this will be in any way wrong after death. It is my view that should you do this to him, if you carry out our command concerning him, we will give you the reward due to one who is attentive and obedient. If you refuse, then give up our cause and withdraw from our army and leave it to Shūmī bin Thil Jawshan. We have given him our authority. Wassalam", (115)

Shūmī took the letter and hastened into ignominy. Umar bin Sa'd received him, read the letter and those two trends

within returned to struggle with each other. If he killed Hussein, he would attain a high position among his bosses. If he did not, however, he would be out of favour.

On the 7th of the month of Muharram, Umar bin Sa'd moved his forces alongside the river to block Hussein's path to the water, so as to make them die there from thirst, or force them to surrender. For Ibn Sa'd that was not enough. He organized his army and began to draw slowly near Hussein (a.s.) and his followers. That was on Thursday, the 7th of Muharram. The soldiers began to brandish their swords and spears.

Hussein (a.s.) was at the time sitting in front of his tent, looking at the sand of death and thinking over the situation. He was pondering the consequences of the coming battle and the sadness and revolutionary awareness which it would nurture in the depths of freedom-lovers.

Hussein (a.s.) did not know of Umar bin Sa'd's declaration. His sister, Zainab, the heroine of Karbala, suddenly came out

"Don't you hear the sounds which are getting nearer?"

No sooner did Zainab say that than Al-Abbas (a.s.) came to Hussein (a.s.) shouting

"O brother, the enemy has come..."

Hussein (a.s.) rose to his feet and considered it necessary to first talk to the Umayyad army and understand exactly what they thought of the situation. He asked his brother al-Abbas to address them before he did so.

The commanders of the army were blinded beyond limits by the rewards they had been promised by Ubadullah. That was why they competed with each other to fight Hussein (a.s.) and shed his blood. Their unanimous reply was: "Let Hussein submit to the governor's authority, otherwise we will fight him."

Al-Abbas (a.s.) conveyed the decision of the Umayyad military commander to his brother Hussein (a.s.). There was no

alternative except war. Hussein (a.s.) could under no circumstances surrender to Ibn Ziyad.

"One like me can never give a pledge of allegiance to Yazid".

He continued:

"I do not wish a death for myself other than martyrdom, while life among the unjust would be unbearable".

He reiterated the words he took from the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), which he conveyed to the Umayyad army at al Baydha a few days earlier. He told them:

"O people, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had said: 'Whoever witnesses an unjust ruler considering the prohibitions of Allah the Almighty as permissible, breaking the covenant of Allah, opposing the practices of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), treating his servants sinfully and cruelly and had seen all these misdeeds but did not oppose him by words or actions, Allah surely will punish him as he wills'". (16)

Yazid, who usurped the caliphate unjustly, was exactly the type of ruler the Prophet (s.a.w.) referred to. So what choice did Hussein have except fighting?

He sent al-Abbas to ask Ibn Sa'd to give them a delay for the night to think the matter over. The following day he would make a final decision. Al-Abbas asked Ibn Sa'd for the period of grace and after discussing it with his commanders, Umar bin Sa'd agreed to it.

THE LAST NIGHT

It was not to rethink his decision concerning the military choice that Hussein asked Ibn Sa'd to grant him the extra time. The path was crystal clear in his mind, but Hussein's eagerness wanted to stay up that night in worship. He decided that it be the last night during which he would talk to his family, companions and loved ones. He knew what lay ahead. Thus he said to his brother al-Abbās the second time he sent him to Ibn Sa'd:

"Go back to them. If you can delay them until morning and persuade them to keep away from us during the evening, then perhaps we may be able to pray to our Lord during the night, to supplicate Him and seek His forgiveness. He knows that I have always loved prayer, the recitation of his Book, invoking Him at length and seeking His forgiveness". (17)

The situation was extremely dismal. The Umayyad army was surrounding the camp of Hussein(a.s.), where women and children were frightened as to what would happen next. Imam Hussein was checking his defences and worrying about how to keep the women and children out of harm's way.

Shortly before sunset, Imam Hussein(a.s.) addressed his companions and family and told them that the enemy wanted no one except him. Thus, anyone of them was free to withdraw during the night in order to escape death. Not one of them would leave him. They unanimously declared their

readiness to light and lay their lives down for the sake of Islam.

Darkness fell. The household of the Prophet (s a w) and their supporters did not close their eyes. Some of them were praying, invoking Allah for His mercy, reciting the Qur'an. Others were preparing weapons and saying last words to their families. Voices were like the buzz of the bees. They were preparing themselves to meet their Lord. Swords and spears were being received. That night they were guests on the land of Karbala. History awaited the event that would take place on the morrow. The swords and spears were pens that would inscribe the most glorious chapter in the continuing drama being written by man.

During that night, Hussein bid farewell to his family and loved ones. He paid visits to al Sa'ad, Zuhair, Bukaynah, Layla, al-Rabi' and al-Baqita's (his nephew). He made his last will as he decided to water the orchard of Islam with his own blood. They were now alone in a faraway land surrounded by an increasing army, as Ubaidullah sent even more armed men. They were besieged by horses, darkness and a huge host. The Apostle of Allah (s a w) was at the great distance of Madinah, along with Imam Hassan (a s) and his mother al-Zahra (a s). They were two months' travel by camel from Madinah¹²⁸. As for their father, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (a s), he was resting at peace in nearby Najaf¹²⁹.

The last night passed quickly and Friday, the day of Ashura, that horrific day, finally came. The spears and swords were prepared to mince and mangle the bodies of Hussein (a s) and his companions.

Umar bin al-Sa'd mobilized his army. He put Amr bin al-Hajaj at the head of his right flank. Shurr bin Thib, Jawshan was in command of the left wing. Urwah bin Qays¹³⁰ was in charge of the cavalry, while Shabath bin Rib'i was leading the foot soldiers. He gave the standard to his retainer Duraid¹³¹.

Imam Hussein(a.s.) surveyed the huge force confronting him. He never budged, nor did he rethink his position. He was as before, calm and imperturbable. That noble hand was as they were described by a poet:

*They wore their hearts on their armour and were compact
ing to lay down their lives.*

He raised his hands in prayer to Allah the Exalted:

*"O Allah, it is You in Whom I trust amid all grief. You are my
hope amid all violence, You are my refuge and provision in every-
thing that happens to me. How many grievances that weaken the
heart, leaving me with no means to handle them, during which the
friend deserts me and the enemy rejoices in it. I lay it before you and
complain of it to you, because of my desire in You. You alone, You
relieve me of it and remove it from me. You are the Master of all
grace, the Possessor of all goodness and the Ultimate Resort of all
desire". (izz)*

The Everlasting Battle

THE EVERLASTING BATTLE

The enemy began to circle around his tent. Imam Hussein(a.s.) had thrown fire wood into the trench they had running along the rear flank of the camp and set it on fire to prevent an attack from that direction.

Shimr looked at the fire burning in the ditch and cried:

"O Hussein, are you hurrying towards the fire of hell before the Day of Resurrection?" "*You are more worthy to be consumed by it*", Imam Hussein(a.s.) replied.

Mus'ab bin Awsajah, a companion of Imam Hussein(a.s.) wanted to let fly an arrow at him.

"*Do not shoot at him*", Hussein(a.s.) ordered, "*for I am unwilling to begin the fighting.*"

Such is the Islamic morality concerning war. Even at the most crucial moments, Imam Hussein(a.s.) would not abandon his principles. Ironically, Shimr was the very wretch who would kill Hussein a few hours later.

Imam Hussein(a.s.) placed Zuhayr bin al Qayn in charge of his right wing and had Habib bin Madhahir heading his left wing. He and his household were at the centre. He gave the standard to his brother al-Abbas. Imam Hussein(a.s.) commanded only seventy-two fighters.

Before the battle began Imam Hussein(a.s.) made another speech to the enemy forces in which he reminded them of their letters and their previous vows of obedience to him. He addressed them trying to stir minds which were

inextricably linked to the earth & temptations of money and power. They did not listen to him, nor were they impressed by his words, all except one person. He was Hur bin Yazid al-Riyahi whose conscience had awakened. At that point Hur was one of the Umayyad military commanders. It was he who had kept Imam Hussein (a.s.) under surveillance since he had entered Iraq. Hur now returned to the fold of the righteous and met his martyrdom in front of Imam Hussein (a.s.).

A few Imam Hussein's companions like Zuhayr bin Qayn and Burayr bin Khadiyat tried to resort to logic in their speeches to the hostile army in explaining Imam Hussein's motives for coming to them. Nobody would listen to them.

Imam Hussein (a.s.) returned, again riding his horse and stood in front of the Umayyad army putting the Book of Allah over his head. He exhorted them:

"O people let us take the Book of Allah and the practice of my grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) to arbitrate between us"¹⁴⁶

All the ears were as if deaf.

"Don't you see", he asked, "that I carry the sword of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) and wear his armor of war and his turban?"

"Indeed, you do", they agreed.

"Then why do you fight me?" he asked.

The response was one of a diffident person, the answer of someone who had neither the will nor the liberty to choose, one who could not distinguish between blind obedience and obedience based on logic. "Because we obey the governor Ibn Ziyad", was the retort¹⁴⁷.

Imam Hussein (a.s.) accordingly washed his hands of them and repeated the poetry of Farwah bin Museer:

Should we defeat our enemy we will go on defeating them. But should we be defeated, it will be one time only. Tell those who rejoice in our affliction: Wake up! for you

would end up like us.' When death lifts its grip off the necks of some people, it surely wanders to others.

He (a.s.) added,

"By Allah, you will not remain on earth longer than the time needed to ride a horse. Then the earth will wheel on you, like a millstone and turn like a pevat. This is certainly what my father had told me, quoting my grandfather the Apostle of Allah (s.w.). Resolve upon your affair and gather your associates. Let not your affair remain dubious to you, then have it executed against me and give me no respite. Surely I rely on Allah my Lord and your Lord; there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock, surely my Lord is on the right path". (26)

Imam Hussein(a.s.) advised Ibn Sa'd several times not to shed the blood of the Muslims but Ibn Sa'd persisted in wanting to fight. At last, Imam Hussein(a.s.) said to him

"O Umar, will you claim to kill me and that bastard appoint you a governor of al-Ray and Lorgan? By Allah, you are never going to delight in it. It is already foredoomed to nothing. Do what you want to. You will never be happy after my death, neither in this life, nor in the hereafter. I can see your head stuck to a reed thrown among the children of Kufa, who play with it"

At that, Ibn Sa'd angrily turned his face from Imam Hussein(a.s.). Satan had taken hold of him and he ordered the bearer of his standard to bring it forward. "Duraid!" he called out, "bring forward your standard for us." He complied and then Umar bin Sa'd put an arrow in his bow and shot it. He said, "All of you be witness that I am the first to shoot." The two sides began to wing arrows at each other and to come forward for single combat. (27)

Ibn Sa'd was thus the one responsible for starting the war, when he directed his arrows towards the camp of the household of the Prophet (s.w.). His followers did likewise and there came such a shower of arrows that no one of the companions of Imam Hussein(a.s.) was left unscathed.

At that point, Imam Hussein(ā s) said to his companions:

"Prepare yourselves. May Allah have mercy on you in meeting the inescapable death. These arrows are the letters of the people to you". (20)

That the companions of Imam Hussein(ā s) were few and vastly outnumbered did not leave a y mark on their morale or courage. They never retreated or fell victim to despair but fought bravely with the Umayyad army. A heated battle ensued which lasted for a bout one hour. When the contest all there were fifty martyrs from among the companions of Imam Hussein(ā s). Then some of the warriors of Ibn Sa'd came forward for single combat. The companions of Imam Hussein(ā s) contested with each other to see who would fight their enemies. Huzayfah Muthabir, Hurayr and Abdulah bin Umayr asked Imam Hussein(ā s) permission to fight. Imam Hussein(ā s) gave permission to Abdulah bin Umayr.

His wife Umm Walid watched him. His right hand was bleeding. The scene excited her, in she boxed a tent pole and went on. He followed. Abdulah tried to prevent her but he failed. Then Imam Hussein(ā s) called out to her:

"May Allah reward you handsomely on behalf of the household of your Prophet. Return to the tent as fighting is not incumbent on women". (21)

The battle continued at Karbala. The cascade of blood was flowing making its way to immortality. The companions of Imam Hussein(ā s) were falling to the ground one after the other. Nevertheless, they inflicted heavy casualties on the Umayyad army. It was for this reason that Umar bin Sa'd decided on his men not to enter single combat with the companions of Imam Hussein(ā s). Instead, he urged them to make one concerted assault on them using all the available weapons.

Units of the Umayyad army, led by Amr bin al Hajar, advanced towards the right wing of Imam Hussein's small army. These then besieged, knelt and directed their spears towards the assailants. That was a militarily successful tactic as the horses were spooked and retreated. Taking advantage of this, the companions of Imam Hussein (a.s.) shot arrows after the enemies.

The men led by Shimr then attacked but this time they charged the left wing of Imam Hussein's fighters. A ferocious battle ensued in which Imam Hussein's men finally succeeded in driving the Umayyads back. Shimr was forced to retreat, humbly. Abdallah bin Umayr al Kalbi fought bravely, killing nineteen cavaliers and twelve foot soldiers. He was eventually injured, captured and killed.

Umm Wahab could not bear the death of her husband and so she went to the battlefield, knelt beside the body and rubbed the blood and dust on the severed head. Noticing her bravery, Shimr ordered his retainer to kill her. The retainer lifted a metal pole and hit the woman on the head. Her head was then cut off and thrown in the direction of Imam Hussein's camp.

Now the attack intensified. They were almost encircled by the Umayyad army. Some of the soldiers went into the tents, looting property. Ibn Sa'd ordered, "Set the tents ablaze." The children cried and the women also wept as they saw the tents burning.

The sun was now high in the sky. It was midday and impossible for Imam Hussein (a.s.) to forget about prayer. He gathered his companions to pray together. Shortly after the prayer they resumed fighting. One after the other they went to the battlefield without returning. His elder son Ali, his brothers, Ubadallah, Uthman, Ja'far and Muhammad, the sons of his brother al Hassan, Abu Bakr al Qasim, al Hassan I, the son of his sister Zainab, Awn bin Abdullah bin Ja'far al Tayyar, the household of Aqeel, Abdullah

bin Mud in bin Aqeel. Abdu-Rahman bin Aqeel. J. bin Aqeel. Muhammad bin Musam bin Aqeel. Abu b bin Aqeel.

Those matchless heroes from his household of Aqeel and of Ali bin Abi Talib as I were now decapitated. They were scattered on the plain of war like he stars on the autumn sky or lotus petals on the surface of a pond.

Imam Hussein (a.s.) stood here amid them, sure of winning them shortly, but deeply sorrowed by the cries of the children and lamentations of the women. He looked for a helper. He called out,

*"Is there any defender of the womenfolk of the Apostles of Allah? Is there a monotheist who fears Allah and so helps us? Is there any supporter seeking Allah's reward and in aid us?"*¹⁵⁰⁴

There was no answer except the wailing of women and children. Imam Hussein (a.s.) had no option except fighting the enemy. His heart was lacerated with fatherly compassion for his baby Abdullah. Certain that he would never return alive from the battlefield, he went to the tent of his sister Zainab, asking her to bring him his baby so as to plant a kiss on his lips and see him for the last time.

His aunt Zainab brought him to his father. Imam Hussein (a.s.) cuddled him to kiss his dry lips, but alas an arrow came swiftly from the enemy and thudded into the throat of the infant¹⁵⁰⁵. Surprisingly enough, Imam Hussein (a.s.) stood there amidst his enemies, gathering the blood in his cupped palm, throwing it upwards, complaining to Allah.

"I find consolation in the fact that what I am suffering is witnessed by Allah".⁽¹⁵⁰⁶⁾

Imam Hussein (a.s.) mounted his horse, accompanied by his brother Abbas bin Ali, and headed towards the Elgris in the hope of bringing water to his entourage. But the Umayyads separated him from his brother, the hero, the cavalier and standard bearer. Imam Hussein (a.s.) now was fighting on his own. Abbas also fought dauntlessly. He cried

a number of the Umayyads but was fatally injured³⁷ thereby insuring the Hussain mantle would perpetually be represented on earth. Imam Hussein repeated the phrase

"O Allah, I complain to You about what is being done to the son of the daughter of Your Prophet". (LMI)

He looked around and there was no one to help him. His companions were strewn lifeless around him, they had done their duty raising the glorious watchword

"I will depart for there is no shame for a young man, whenever he intends to do what is right and fight like a Muslim. He who soothes righteous men through the sacrifice of his life, has parted with the cursed and opposed the criminal. If I live, I will not regret what I have done, and if I die, I will not be blamed. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled"

Imam Hussein was all alone. He was carrying the sword of the Apostle of Allah (s a w) in his hand and the heart of Alitas (s) in his depths. On his tongue there was the word of piety. This was the very day the Prophet (s a w) promised him and this was the place he told him would be his last abode. He called the enemy to fight him in single combat. One after the other came forward and were dispatched to the other world.

Imam Hussein (a s) was still very worried about his camp, which continued to burn.

When the forces of Ibn Sa'd cut him off from the camp, he called to the Umayyads,

"I am fighting you. Women have no blame. Prevent your villains from harassing my womenfolk as long as I am alive" (LMI)

A soldier directed an arrow at Imam Hussein (a s) which lodged in his throat. Spears and swords were eating into his body. He was weak from profuse bleeding while his body became a metaphor for a book, on which every sword blow or arrow had written the most majestic lines of an epic tale.

They were sixty-seven wounds, ⁴⁰ silently reciting the story of struggle and jihad and nobly inscribing the tragic chapters of oppression and injustice. The enemies were not yet satisfied. Shimr approached Iman Hussem (a.s.) carrying his sword and struck him several times, then he cut his head off. He carried the head proudly to be placed in front of Ibn Zayad as a bounty waiting its reward.

The head that never said 'yes' to the oppressors, that was repeating

"By Allah, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated, nor will I flee like a slave".

Thus the head was presented as a gift to Ibn Zayad.

HUSSEIN'S STAR SETS

The dust settled and the horses no longer neighed. The swords were sheathed, while the spears bent their heads down. The world was gloomy as the sun hastened angrily to the west to set. The desert craned its neck, witnessing perhaps the most horrible crime committed and the palm trees collected their fronds cursing the fact they flourished so near the place of the dastardly deed. The wind was to make shrouds out of the sand to cover the mutilated bodies scattered on the Kufan wasteland.

There lay Hussein (a.s.), the lord of the martyrs, 17 heroes from among his brothers, his sons, his brother's sons, his uncles' sons and nearly 60 giant companions, all beheaded, on the extended desert.⁴⁶ Next to them was the camp of Hussein that hosted only the women and children. The only male present was Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad (a.s.) the bed-ridden Imam who could not take part in the battle.

The horsemen began trampling spitefully on the bodies.⁴⁷ Finishing that, they headed for Hussein's camp. The women and children took flight from the oncoming marauders. There was nowhere to take refuge. Voices calling Hussein (a.s.) sharply echoed:

Where are you, O Hussein? Don't you see these ruthless bandits raiding your camp? Don't you hear the cries of the children? Don't you hear the women wailing?⁴⁸

The savage soldiers broke into the camp. They began

plundering the helpless women and children. But those
who were good things were saved by force and
of them. They took them from the addresses with
hurling. What could their mothers do except
from the criminals who?⁹

The severed heads were a prey for the sports in
among the killers.

A long caravan set off for Kufa led by the brave heroes
Khawla bin Yazid al-Asbah and by Hamid bin al-Mu-
al Azdi carried a long spear which bore Hussayn's head
their hearts were entrusted to Shim bin Dharash bin Qays
bin al-Ash'ath and Amru bin al-Harith.

It is now time to pass to another time and place
next who stood at Kuthba between the
lamenting the poor Hussayn. He speaks
only as the has just witnessed the
Za'nah and al-Rabah.¹⁰

They became bewildered for they
never except shoring. It was not
when he saw the bodies deplored that
heart was not torn apart the sword was
body which became a place of prayer to the new
martyrs. His heart shivered with desolation. It was
nite content it would have evaporated completely. It was
year unceasing body on the dust dressed only in
after. His forehead was covered with dust where seven
monotheists eyes were. They were his head. His
head on that spear wrapped in a cloth. He
saw the Book on the spear. Indeed they had the Book
on the selfsame neck. Let the Book of Allah
it suffered. Let Islam shed tears for the loss.

MARTYRS' DEATHS

The convex caravan⁴⁶ comprising the household of the Prophet (s a w) and their companions moved towards Karb. In it were women, children and Abhin Hussein (a S a j)⁴⁷. The martyr's bodies remained wind-swept encircled by pools of blood.

Scattered on the battlefield were the decapitated bodies. Here was the body of Hussein (a s) and there prostrated the remnant. At this nearby rested the corpses of the friends of Hussein (a s). They were all like stars on the earthly sky.

A S departed heavily shackled while his grieving heart was transfixed at the site of the martyrs. The holy caravan bid farewell to the lifeless heroes, wishing that they had been let to be buried with them. They departed while that ground remained an inspiration for the poets to fearfully lament the tragedy.

Al Sharaf al Rachi⁴⁸ looked back at the scene three centuries later and was still shocked at the cruelty of the dastards. He addressed himself to the Prophet (s a w), condoling him over the martyrdom of his magnificent grandchild.

They were guests in a barren desert, wherein they camped without food.

They tasted no water till they gathered, at sword point, to quench death's thirst...

The sun was eclipsed by the brightly blazing suns that were their bodies.

The wild animals tore their bodies: the bodies most pre-
cedent in faith.

Their faces were lanterns: they were waning in waning and
falling stars.

O Apostle of Allah! if only you had witnessed them: some
of them murdered and the others taken captive.

Even from shade were they deprived and though thirsty
they were stabbed with spears.

Then you would have witnessed a heart-rending scene
that filled the eyes with dust.

O Ummah! O justice and tyranny: what a reward you
had given the Apostle of Allah!

You butchered his offspring: as one would have done
with sheep: then you drove his womenfolk like captives.

By his martyrdom you dropped the pillars of religion and
the banners of faith were forsaken.

They had killed him: though they knew he was the fifth
person of the shawl group.¹⁴⁹¹

They carried a head: to whose grandfather they send
blessings willingly or by force. He was the dead for whom
Fatimah, her father, and the noble Ali wept. Should the
Apostle of Allah live after him: he would have grieved for
him.

Let us leave the poet aside and have a look at the people
from Banu Asad inhabiting al-Ghadrivvah: near whose
houses the battle took place. Upon the departure of the army
of Umar bin al-Said, they went out and examined the bodies
that had been left for three days under the blazing sun and
the sweeping wind: prey to the wild animals.¹⁴⁹²

Some of Banu Asad who had been staying at al-
Ghadrivvah went to Hussein (a.s.) and his followers. They
performed the funeral prayer over them. Then they buried
Hussein (a.s.) in the place where his tomb stands and interred
his son Ali bin Hussein al-Asghar (the infant) at the foot of
the body. The graves dug around the area next to the feet of

Hussein(a s) were for the martyrs from his house and his followers. They gathered them and buried them altogether. However, they buried al-Abbas bin Aa(a s), in the place where he was killed on the road to al Ghadh riyah, where his tomb still is.⁷¹⁵

Hussein's body remains near the Euphrates in Karba a⁷¹⁶ a place where the faithfuls' hearts congregate, a beacon for revolutionaries. He joined the martyrs, the faithful, the good and the prophets and what excellent companions these are.

The Captives Return

THE CAPTIVES RETURN

The captives moved towards Kufa, carrying the household of Muhammad's wife as Ibn Ziyad's captives. This was on the 11th day of Muharram, the day after the massacre took place. The captives moved across the desert, haunted by the memories of the previous day and night, which they spent near the martyrs. They were surrounded by savages who took delight in listening to the wails of the girls and women and the moaning of Abbas bin Hussein as he succumbed under the weight of both chains and sickness.

The captives entered Kufa. The people rushed to the streets. They were either ignorant, like those who wondered who the captives were, or knowing everything about the tragedy and thus struggling to hold back their tears while suffering the pangs of grief.

The caravan pushed its way through the crowds towards the governor's palace. The Kufans were in tears for the sufferings of the Prophet's household and for the misdeeds and evil deeds they themselves had acquiesced in. These people had deceived Hussein bin Ali (a.s.). They were now looking at his women and those of his companions, suffering under the brutish torture of Ibn Ziyad. That was the head of the lord of martyrs impaled on a long spear, instead of residing at the governor's palace to judge by the Book of Allah.

Zainab (a.s.) silently examined the gathering crowds, while tasting the bitterness of Hussein's loss. She looked at

... to him to keep
... when the sun of His
... but to say

... to Allah and divine blessings be sent on my father
... and his good and exemplary descendants. O people of
... who are deceitful and treacherous. Do you shed tears?
... dry up and your loud lamentations never
... like the woman that weaves to knit the thread which
... spin. Your faith is nothing but deceit and betrayal.
... but the appointed, designated period (spe-
... and ruler. There are among you those who
... as a beautiful plant growing in faith on the silver out-
... that with its vast roots have won victory for
... Allah is displeased with you and its punishment shall run apace.

... and washing. Indeed by Allah I have wept
and laugh but little. For your deed was so heinously degrading
that you will never be able to atone for it. How can you wash away
the crime of murdering the son of the Seal of the Prophets, the
recipient of the message, the lord of the youth in paradise, the refuge
of your mothers, the refuge to whom you resorted during affliction,
the bright divine proof of yours, your master who defended the
Prophet's tradition.

What an awful sin you did commit! Away with you, there will
be no forgiveness for you. Certainly your efforts lacked your heads
suffered loss and your bargain is brought to naught. You have made
yourselves deserving of the wrath of Allah. Abusement and humili-
ation have been brought down upon you.

Woe to you! Do you know how you tore the liver of the Apostle
of Allah? Whom of his moments you exposed? What blood of his
you shed? What honour of his you defamed?

Your deed is most certainly so dangerous, ugly and foul, that
it filled the earth and sky with its putridness. Are you surprised that
it rained blood? Certainly the punishment of the Hereafter is suf-
ficiently more abasing, and you shall not be helped. Don't make light
of the delay of punishment so that it is not hastened by the fear of
missing the taking of revenge. Most surely Allah is watching.

... through the streets of Kufa on

the direction of the governor's palace. The captives of the household of Muhammad and those who shared with them witnessing the massacre of al-Qadisiyah were brought before Ubaydallah bin Ziyad who opened the doors of his palace to receive the people arriving to congratulate him on his victory.

He was rapacious as he sat in front of him was the head of Hussein (a.s.). He frequently poked the head with a cane. That meant he angered an old companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Zayd bin Arqam cried as he saw Ziyad poke the face of Hussein with his cane.

"Take your cane away from those two lips. For by Allah other than whom there is no deity, I have seen the prophet the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) touch these lips countless times. With that he burst into tears."

"May Allah make your eyes shed tears," said Ibn Zayd. "Do you weep when Allah granted us victory? It was not for the fact that you are an old man who has become senile and your mind has left you. I would have cut your head off."⁽⁵⁸⁾

Zayd bin Arqam left the assembly of Ibn Ziyad angrily, drying his eyes as he saw the image of the Apostle of Allah carrying his beloved Hussein between his arms. As soon as Arqam disappeared, the captives were brought to the governor's palace.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The women of al-Husayn, Al-Husayn al-Sajida (a.s.) were brought into the presence of Ibn Ziyad.

Ibn Ziyad addressed the women who used the name of her brother's uprising after his martyrdom:

"Praise be to Allah who disfigured you, killed you and revealed the false nature of your claims."

The response was not long in coming. It was Abdullah derbolt for Ziyad:

"Praise be to Allah Who has favoured us with his Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and has purified us completely from sin." He

only disgraces the great sinner and reveals the false nature of the profligate. Such men are not among us.”¹⁰⁰

Ibn Zayad / You take them from me when Abu Hussein al-Sayid was reached.

“Who are you?”, Ibn Zayad asked.

“I am *Abi al-Hussein*”, he told him.

“*Do not kill Abu al-Hussein*”, asked Ibn Zayad.

I had a brother who was also named Abi answered al-Sayid, “*the people killed him.*”

“*Do not kill him*”, insisted Ibn Zayad.

“*Allah takes the souls at the time of their death*”, replied al-Sayid.

With that Ibn Zayad was very angry, so he called his men like al-Sayid away and cut his head off.

Zainab was saying on to her nephew saying

“O Ibn Zayad, haven't you had enough of our blood? By Allah, I will not leave him. If you kill him, kill me with him!”¹⁰¹

He reacted to Zainab's demand, then left his assembly for the mosque to make a speech to inform the people of the murder of Hussein (a.s.) and the victory of Yazid.

Present at the mosque was Abdullah bin Afif al-Azari. He heard Ibn Zayad say

“Praise be to Allah who has revealed the truth and the followers of the truth and has given victory to the commander of the faithful, Yazid and his party. I have asked the bar who is the son of a Jew, and his Shia.”¹⁰²

Abdullah could not bear that and rose stoutly challenging the Umayyad regime. He retorted

do you kill the sons of the prophet and take the place of men of truth on the pulpit?¹⁰³

Ibn Zayad was at the peak of his happiness but when Abdullah heard these words, that awakened him from his dream. He said in a choice but to save face by ordering the killing of Abdullah. However, 200 men of the Azdi tribe prevented him from arresting him.

Ubaydullah was not set at ease until he had accepted
Islam. In the next day he was taken to the place of
execution. Abdulah and al-Fatimah were with him. He was
killed and then crucified.

On the following day the head of Hassan was
shown to the Khatib. He wanted to re-
ceive him and since any finger of spirit of rebellion in
them it was paraded through the streets of Kufa. The
head was returned to the place of execution. So a star
shining as a spear of justice hung on the wall of
media, decorating history's chest.

The caravan was led by the head of Hassan and
the head of the rest of the martyrs. It was led by women
children and Abdul Hassan. So the caravan was
filled with heavy chains and shackles. The chains were
fastened to the necks of the captives.

Zaynab was following the head of her brother.
Shortly after his sword Hassan's was put back to its
sheath. She had taken up her responsibility of con-
taining his movements. She accomplished it with
firmness and in a noble manner.

The caravan entered Hama. It was here that the Umayyad spies
were spreading rumors. The governor had created a
group of the Khatib and that these captives were their
women and children. The governor's house came the Syrians to
watch the process. Hassan's prisoners were presented
to Yazid. The head was put in front of him and he looked at
Sa'ad.

Son of Hassan, he said to my father on the
bond of kinship with me. I spread ignorance of my
rights trying to deprive me of my position of authority. Now
Allah has shown me my way.

A Sa'ad (a.s.) immediately said:

يا محمد بن حسين يا علي بن ابي طالب لا يتركك الله في كنف من قبله

"No evil befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allah", (64)

Holy Qur'an (57: 22)

Al-Sajjad and the captives remained in Syria for a time, then they returned to Karbala' on their way to Madinah, bringing with them the heads to be buried with their bodies. Finally they entered Madinah. The news had already been spread among the people who raised their voices in weeping and lamentation. They were saddened deeply when they listened to Bishr bin Hashim who declared:

"O people of Yathrib! there is no place for you to stand here for Hussein has been murdered. My tears flow heavily. His body is still bloody at Karbala', while his head is carried on a long spear."

Madinah lived through a period of depression and anger until it revolted against the Umayyad regime. This was precipitated when Abdullah bin Handhalah rose against the governor of Madinah.

IMPACT OF THE UPRISING ON THE MUSLIM UMMAH

The value of any purposive religious or political action is estimated according to its results. Political and social actions may bear their fruit directly, still results may lag behind actions in terms of time. The aftershocks remain to interact and leave their traces long after the key events have taken place.

The impact of a given political or social event may be temporary and limited in place and time. Sometimes the impact may extend over a long period and extensive area.

Hussein's uprising was certainly a great one, with limitless impact and divergent objectives. It was not confined purely to taking power, though political power was of extreme importance in the view of Hussein(a.s.) for positively changing the social conditions and reforming the community. His mission had several short range and long range objectives. He viewed political power as his father did.

"O Allah, You know that what we have done was not a contest to take power, or aimed at seeking to possess the remnants of worldly trivia. We wanted, indeed, to restore the lost aspects of Your faith and revive Your laws that were being ignored, so that the oppressed may feel secure".

Imam Hussein(a.s.) had the following goals in mind when he started his uprising:

1. Changing of the political conditions, the ruling system and the way of administering civil affairs and treating the

ummah in accordance with the divine standards set forth by Islam.

2. Awakening the people to the extent of their involvement in making a powerful movement which would not let them deviate or neglect Islamic laws.

3. Emphasizing the necessity of militarily opposing the unjust ruler.

4. Rectifying the ummah in line with Islamic laws.

5. Rectifying deviation and putting into practice the shariah.

6. Breaking the will of fear and terror that was imposed on the ummah and stirring the spirit of exaltation and sacrifice in it.

As soon as Hussein's stand against the regime, he was sure that his movement would not succeed militarily, but that it would be the starting point of large-scale opposition. Accordingly, explosions and uprisings commenced and the regime reached the verge of collapse. The government swayed and lost the last threads connecting it to the ummah. It then resorted to oppression and terror as a means to silence any opposing voice and suppress rebellies. The ummah began to feel the weight of having abandoned Hussein's stand to the hands of the oppressors. A series of armed uprisings sprouted weakening the Umayyads in large areas. In the face of that regime, Hussein's blood was thus the key element in precipitating its downfall.

His revolt smoothed the way for Abdullah bin al-Zubayr to move at Makkah, declaring war against the regime. His movement almost engulfed Makkah before it was defeated at the hands of the Umayyads.

A statement recorded by history, vividly describes the wide-ranging effects of Hussein's uprising. Al-Ya'qubi mentioned that "a man said: 'Once I went to see Abdul Malik bin Marwan. I saw him with the head of Musa bin al-Zubayr placed in front of him'".

Musayyab bin Na'bah a. Fazari

Shortly after that there were the uprisings of al Mukhtar bin Ubadah al-Ja'fari and Ibrahim bin Ma'k al-Ashtar in 66 A.H. They adopted the slogan 'Vengeance for Hussein's Murder'. They tracked the killers of Hussein (a.s.) and killed all of them including Ubadah bin Zayad, Hossain bin Numayr and Umar bin Sa'd.

The opposition continued its armed actions till the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyad regime. They called for propaganda reasons only, for the restoring of the rule to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.).

Imam Hussein kindled the flame of revolt against the Umayyads till their destruction. They wanted to destroy him but lost their power due to that very crime.

Hussein (a.s.) remains forever a slogan for the revolutionaries, a lighthouse for the free and a source of struggle and liberation.

Peace be on him on the day he was born and on the day he was martyred and on the day he is raised to life.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the world.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) Shaikh al-Mufid (died 412 A.H.) al-Irsaad (the Guidance), p. 198
- 2) It is narrated that Fatimah al-Zahra (a.s.) was six-months pregnant when she gave birth to him. Tuhaf al-Agha (Treasures of the Hereafter), Muhibuddin al-Tabar (died 694 A.H.) p. 118
- 3) Ibid., p. 124
- 4) Ibid.
- 5, Ibid., p. 123
- 6) Ibid., p. 229
- 7) Ibid., p. 128
- 8) Ibid., p. 124.
- 9) Ibid/ pp. 26-127
- 10) Ibid/ p. 129
- 11) One of those who fought the battle of Ashura described him in these words: "have never seen a person bereaved of his sons, menfolk and his companions more lion-hearted than him. The fugi soldiers were scattering to the right and left of him like goats when a wolf comes upon them." Ibn al-Atheer al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh vol. 4, p. 77
- 12) A'ishah was the wife of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) and the daughter of the second caliph Abu-Bakr
- 13) Maqatil al-Talibiyyin (The Deaths of al-Talibiyyin), Abu-Faraj al-Isfahani, p. 38.
- 14) A. Fusooli al-Muhimmah (The Important Chapters), Yun al-Sabbagh al-Maliki p. 163
- 15) Tarikh al-Khulafa (The History of the Caliphs), Jalaluddin al-Sayooti, p. 191.
- 16) Sulh al-Hassan (The Peaceful Agreement of Imam Hassan), Shaikh Radhi Aar-Yasin/p. 260. Quoted from Jmdal al-Talib (The Prop of the Seeker), Ibn al-Muhannah (died 91) A.H.
- 17) Jalaluddin al-Sayooti, Ibid/ p. 191.

- 18, Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Malik/ *Ibid*/ p.163.
- 19) *Ibid*
- 20, Shaikh al-Mufid, al-Irshad (The Guidance), p 19.
- 21) Imam al-Hassan a.s. , was martyred in the year 50 A.H. in the month of Safar or Rabi' al-Awwal.
- 22) Mu'awiyah did that in the wake of the martyrdom of Imam Hassan (a.s.).
Some say he declared that before the martyrdom of Imam Hassan (a.s.).
- 23, Jala'uddin al-Sayoo'i, Tarikh al-Khulafa' (History of the Caliphs), pp 196-197
- 24, Shaikh al-Mufid/*Ibid*/ p 200
25. Ibn al-Atheer, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh (The Complete Accounts of History), vol 4, p.14
26. Mu'awiyah died in the month of Rajab, in the year 60 A.H.
- 27) Ibn al-Atheer, *Ibid*.
- 28, Ibn al-Atheer/ *Ibid*/ p.15
- 29) *Ibid*.
- 30, Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Malik/ *Ibid*/ p.182
- 31, Sayyid ibn Tawoos/Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.), (The Story of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s.)) pp 10-11.
- 32 A-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Hussein (The Story of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s.)) vol 1, p 88.
- 33, Sayyid ibn Tawoos, *Ibid*/ p.11.
- 34, Shaikh al-Mufid, *Ibid*/ p.204
- 35, Abdur-Razzaq al-Muqqarim/ Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.) pp 141-142
- 36, Tarikh al-Tabari, vol 7, p 104, quoted by Shaikh Radhi Aar-Yasin in his book 'Sulh Imam al-Hassan (a.s.) (The Peace treaty of Imam Hassan (a.s.)) p 320.
- 37 Shaikh Radhi Aar-Yaseen/ Sulh Imam al-Hassan (a.s.) p 328
- 38) Allamah al-Majlisi/Bihar al-Anwar (Seas of Lights)/ vol.10/ p.149, quoted by Shaikh Radhi Aar-Yasin in his book 'Sulh Imam al-Hassan (a.s.)' p.338.
- 39) *Ibid*/ p.328
- 40) Ibn al-Atheer/ *Ibid*/ vol 3/ p.462
- 41) *Ibid*/ p.462
- 42) Ar-Mas'oodi/ Murooj al-Thahab (The Tracts of Gold), vol 3, p 14.
- 43) Ibn al-Atheer/*Ibid*/ vol.4/ p 12
- 44) *Ibid*/ vol 3/ p 413.
- 45, Ar-Mas'oodi/ *Ibid*/ vol.3/ p. 183-184
- 46, *Ibid*/ vol.3/ p.23.
- 47) Ibn al-Atheer/ *Ibid*/ vol.3/ p.91.

- 48) Ibn Qutayba al-Daynani, al-Ma'arif (Knowledge), p. 84
- 49) Ibid/ p. 84.
- 50) Al-Masoodi/ Ibid/ vol. 2/ p. 333.
- 51) Tabaqat bin Sa'd (Classes of bin Sa'd)/ vol. 3, part one/ p. 105. quoted by Shaikh Muhammad Hassani Aal Yaseen, p. 138.
- 52) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol. 2/ p. 333
- 53) Al-Masoodi/ Ibid/ vol. 3/ pp. 67-68.
- 54) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol. 4/ p. 16.
- 55) Ibid/ p. 17
- 56) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p. 2
- 57) Ibid/ p. 4.
- 58) Maqta' Abi-Makhnaf (The Story of the Martyrdom of al-Hussein a.s. by Abi-Makhnaf, from which Abdul-Karim al-Qazwini quoted the foregoing text in his book Al-Wa'ha'iq Al-Rasmiyyah li-Thawrat Imam al-Hussein (a.s.) (The Official Documents of Imam Hussein's Uprising), p. 45
- 59) Shaikh al-Mufid mentioned in his book (al-Irshad)/ p. 201, that Imam Hussein set off for Makkah in the year 60 A.H. two days before the end of the month of Rajab
- 60) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid.
- 61) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol. 4/ p. 19
- 62) The distance between Madinah and Makkah is about 450 kilometres
- 63) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p. 202
- 64) Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani/ Ibid/ p. 58.
- 65) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p. 202
- 66) Ibid
- 67) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol. 4/ p. 20
- 68) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p. 204
- 69) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqarrami/ Ibid/ pp. 4-142
- 70) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol. 4/ p. 21.
- 71) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p. 17
- 72) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos maintained that this letter was the last one sent to Imam Hussein (a.s.) from the Kufans. It was carried by Harun bin Zayd al-Sabri and Sa'd bin Abdullah al-Hanafi. Tell me, Imam Hussein, asked them, 'Who were those who decided to write this letter you were charged with its delivering to me?' O Son of the Apostle of Allah (s.w.a.), they replied, they were Shabath bin Rabi', Hajjar bin Abi Jur', Yazid bin al-Harith bin Ruwaym, Jirwah bin Qays, Amru bin al-Hajaj, and Muhammad bin Umayr bin Ataruf (Muhammad bin Amr al-Tamimi). This was mentioned also by Shaikh al-Mufid in his book al-Irshad/ p. 203
- 73) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ pp. 15-16.
- 74) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol. 4/ p. 21

- Here Imam Hussein (a.s.) is telling Ibn al-Zubayr of his inevitable fate
- 97) Ibn al-Atheer/ p.38
- 98) ibid
- 99) ibid/ p.41
- 100) Ibn al-Atheer/ ibid/ p.40
- 101) The mother of Aliakhat bin Yaqar was Imam Hussein's wet nurse
- 102) A-Ya qoo'b mentioned that Imam Hussein (a.s.) heard of Muslim's martyrdom at Ustqatanah Murooyah Thahab/ vol.4 p.243
- 103) Ibn al-Atheer/ ibid/ p.43
- 104) Refers to the great numbers of the horses
- 105) Shaikh al-Mufid/ ibid/ p.225
- 106) ibid/ p.226
- 107) ibid/ p.226
- 108) Zuhayr bin al-Dayn was one of Imam Hussein's followers who joined him during his journey at a place called Zuhayr. He spoke in praise of Imam Hussein (a.s.) and his companions praisingly saying: 'We participated in a battle at Lajnah and with few men. We gained very much booty and were very happy. When Sa'ad bin Haris saw how much happy we were he cried: 'If you catch up with the Lord of the Youth of the household of Muhammad (s.a.w.) you ought to be happier because of your fight with him than winning war booty. 'Abdu Razzaq al-Munqadhi, Mawla al-Hussein (a.s.) p.178 quoted from Tarikh al-Taba' vol.6 p.224
- 109) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ ibid/ pp.32-33
- 110) ibid/ p.33
- 111) Shaikh al-Mufid/ ibid/ p.227 Ibn al-Atheer/ ibid/ vol.4 p.52 Thus the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s.) took place on Friday not on Thursday as it is widely accepted
- 112) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ ibid/ p.33 Shaikh al-Mufid mentioned on the authority of Ali bin Imam Hussein (a.s.) said (a.s.) that Imam Hussein (a.s.) was repeating the verse of the Qur'an on the 10th of Muharram
- 113) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ ibid/ p.34
- 114) Ibn al-Atheer/ ibid/ vol.4/ pp.52-53
- 115) Shaikh al-Mufid/ ibid/ p.229
- 116) Ibn al-Atheer/ ibid/ vol.4/ p.48
- 117) Shaikh al-Mufid/ ibid/ p.230
- 118) It took Imam Hussein (a.s.) about thirty days to travel from Mardinah to Makkah and from Madinah to Karbala during which he travelled about two thousand kilometres
- 119) The battle of Ashura took place at Karbala. Imam Hussein (a.s.) was laid to rest at Karbala some more than 75 kilometres from Najaf where Imam Ali (a.s.) was buried

- (20) Some historians called him 'Thul-Wayn'.
- (21) Some historians called him 'Thul-Wayn'.
- (22) This invocation was reported by Shaikh al-Mufid in his book 'al-Irshad' p.233, quoting from Imam Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad (a.s.) who had witnessed the battle of Karbala but did not take part in it due to his sickness. Also present at Karbala was his son Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.), who was four years old. Al-Sajjad (a.s.) said: 'When the cavalry approached Imam Hussein (a.s.), he raised his hands and said: "O Allah, it is You, etc."'
- (23) Burayer was one of the teachers of Qur'anic recitation at Kufa.
- (24) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqarram/ibid/ p.23
- (25) Ibid.
- (26) Ibid.
- (27) Imam Hussein's statement proved true. Umar bin Sa'd gained nothing but shame and disgrace. He was killed at the hands of al-Mukhtar bin Ubaydah al-Thaqafi at Kufa. See Ibn al-Atheer, vol.4 p.24. The events of the year 66 A.H.
- (28) Shaikh al-Mufid/ibid/ p.236.
- (29) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqarram/ibid/ p.237
- (30) Ibid.
- (31) Ibid/ pp.238-239
- (32) It was reported that he and his companions prayed by nodding their heads as they had no time to pray as usual. It was reported also that they offered the prayer of fear.
- (33) Al-Hassan was injured but was carried away and cured. He did not attain martyrdom.
- (34) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ibid/ p.49
- (35) The one who shot the arrow was Harmaia bin Kahil. Historians reported that the baby was murdered prior to his uncle al-Abbas.
- (36) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ibid/ p.49
- (37) Shaikh al-Mufid/ibid/ p.240. Al-Abbas bin Ali (a.s.), was the half-brother of Imam Hussein (a.s.). His mother was Umm al-Banin Fatimah the daughter of Hizam al-Kalbi.
- (38) Shaikh al-Mufid/ibid/ p.240
- (39) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ibid/ p.50
- (40) The wounds of Imam Hussein (a.s.) numbered thirty-three spear stabs and thirty-four sword strikes besides the arrow inflicted wounds.
- (41) Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Ma'lik/ibid/ p.193./Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ibid/ p.60
- (42) Umar bin Sa'd ordered ten of the killers to trample the body of Imam Hussein (a.s.). Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ibid/ p.56.

Handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in four lines and appears to be a list or a set of instructions.

1. The first line is partially obscured but seems to start with "The first line".
2. The second line is "The second line".
3. The third line is "The third line".
4. The fourth line is "The fourth line".



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